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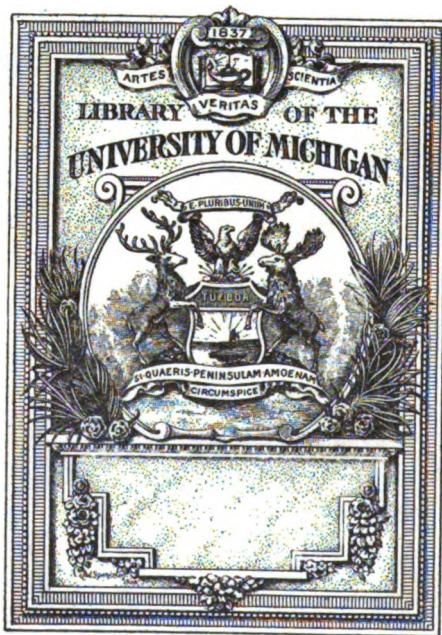
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# EIGHTEENTH CENTURY STUDIES.

*ESSAYS.*

BY

FRANCIS HITCHMAN,

AUTHOR OF "THE PUBLIC LIFE OF THE EARL OF BEACONSFIELD," ETC., ETC.

London :

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## Dedication.

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TO HER TO WHOSE UNFLAGGING DEVOTION I OWE MY LIFE, AND ALL THAT  
SWEETENS IT,

TO MY WIFE,

I DEDICATE THIS LITTLE BOOK, IN ESPECIAL MEMORY OF 1871.

F. H.

LONDON, January, 1881.



## P R E F A C E.

SOME half-dozen of the chapters which make up this volume have already appeared in various magazines, and I have to offer my thanks to Messrs. Smith, Elder, and Co.; Messrs. Richard Bentley and Sons; and Mr. John Maxwell, for their readily accorded permission to reprint them.

The remaining Essays see the light for the first time, and I venture to hope that they will be found not less worthy of attention than those which have already been printed, and concerning which my editors have been pleased to speak very kindly.

It will probably be observed that one or two of the Essays deal with times which are not strictly those of the Eighteenth Century. Macaulay somewhere makes the remark that the Nineteenth Century did not begin until 1830, and I must ask the reader to remember that fact in dealing with this volume of "Eighteenth Century Studies."

F. H.



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# EIGHTEENTH CENTURY STUDIES.

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## JOHN WILKES.

THERE is a certain engraving by Hogarth which represents with cruel fidelity the ugly face of John Wilkes. The artist did not spare his subject in the execution of this work. As Mr. Thackeray has said, "There is very little mistake about Hogarth's satire; if he has to paint a man with his throat cut, he draws him with his head almost off, and he tried to do the same for his enemies," of whom Wilkes was one. In this matter, as in so many other matters pictorial, genius has triumphed over qualities of another species, so that the man who stood up gallantly for the liberties of his country against an almost overwhelming majority, is known to posterity rather by the satire of his caricaturist than by the record of his love for liberty or the tradition of his fight against faction. His ill-favoured countenance has been handed down to us of the nineteenth century, together with a strenuous belief in his personal immorality; but the good which he wrought in his life has been written in the sand and effaced by the devouring floods of time. At the best this is ungrateful. We enjoy the fruit of his labours, and vituperate the man who planted the tree. But for him we might still have been under the tyranny of

an oligarchical faction, yet the only memory of him that we preserve is that of his vices. It is but fair to admit, however, that those vices were conspicuous, and that, with the purer manners of our own day, it is not altogether surprising that they should attract attention first. Yet those very vices have been exaggerated. The failings of Wilkes were not peculiar to himself. He has been accused of being unchaste, a drunkard, and a hunter after popularity. The former offences were certainly not uncommon in the eighteenth century. It was a stock subject of ridicule with the enemies of Pitt that no sin of the first class could be laid to his charge, from which it is evident that no particular shame was attached to such offences against good morals a century ago. The second charge he has himself explicitly denied. "I never was a drunkard," he says in one of his letters, and even the severest of his contemporaries are compelled to own that, whatever may have been the faults of his youth, his latter life was "sober, reasonable, and temperate." The charge of popularity-hunting may safely be left to take care of itself. An age which, like our own, not only tolerates but applauds more than one violent and unscrupulous demagogue, may well be charitable towards one whose theories were in no case revolutionary, and who never, even when protesting most vehemently against the tyranny of faction, desired in any way to change the laws of his country, or demanded more than the fulfilment of the letter of the law and the guarantees of the Constitution.

It is not, however, either by apologies or by excuses that the memory of Wilkes may best be defended. His conspicuous and positive merits, his courage, cheerfulness, and good-humour, have never been fairly

appreciated. His failures have been told often enough, especially by those who obtain their knowledge at second-hand. Of his triumphs nothing has been said, chiefly because those who have written about him have regarded him from a standpoint of antagonism. For testimony as to his admirable social qualities, it is only necessary to appeal to his contemporaries. Even Johnson's "surly virtue" gave way before his tact and courtesy. "His name," said that great moralist, "has been sounded from pole to pole as the phœnix of convivial felicity." Lord Mansfield, who had little reason to love him, declared that "Mr. Wilkes was the pleasantest companion, the politest gentleman, and the best scholar he ever knew." Gibbon, while objecting to his vice and indecency, declared that he had "scarcely ever met with a better companion." Women of all ranks—seldom the worst judges, by the way—adored him. He could with truth declare that, in spite of his repulsive features, he would with a short grace make more way with a woman than the handsomest fellow in the room. Of his real tenderness of heart numberless incidents are related. Charles Lamb used to quote with great approbation a saying of Wilkes's concerning certain blackbirds which ate his cherries and which his gardener wanted to shoot, "Poor birds! they are welcome." Nor is other confirmation wanting. His letters to his daughter, uninteresting as they are in themselves, have a special interest in this respect as proving his devoted and self-sacrificing affection, even under circumstances which might have made many another man harsh and cold. But he was more than a mere jovial companion, a gallant courtier, or even a tender father. He was a scholar, and the chosen companion of men of letters. To this fact Lord Mansfield

is not the only witness. A certain Dr. Brewster, who translated Persius, dedicated his work to him solely out of admiration for his literary attainments. Another writer of similar character and qualifications, Andrew Baxter, the once well-known author of "An Inquiry into the Nature of the Human Soul," paid a similar compliment to him; and, in the dedicatory letter prefixed to the former work, refers to his "agreeable conversations in the Capuchins' garden at Spa." Nor does the testimony come entirely from without. He published an edition of Catullus which, had he been a clergyman, would have led to his elevation to the Bench, and he made also considerable progress in a translation of Anacreon, which Warton strenuously urged him to give to the world. Furthermore, he edited the "Characters" of Theophrastus, and published the works of several mediæval writers—Busbequius and others. With modern languages his acquaintance was minute and extensive. French, chiefly no doubt through his long residence on the Continent, was as familiar with him as English. Italian he read and wrote with fluency and correctness, while with Spanish he had more than a merely distant acquaintance. His English style, bating a few Gallicisms, was terse, spirited, and idiomatic; while his "lapidarian" inscriptions have been cited as models in that species of composition. With the fine arts he was reasonably familiar. He had few paintings, it is true, but his collection of engravings was large, valuable, and admirably selected. Reynolds spoke always in high terms of his taste and judgment, and more than once referred with great admiration to his collection. His wit was, however, his most delightful quality. Some of his jests have passed into the

collections of “ana,” and more into that “foundling hospital for wit,” Joe Miller. Yet it was best revealed, not in isolated epigrams, or carefully elaborated *bons-mots*, but in an easy lambency which lights up all that he has written, and plays around all the records of his conversation. But for it his letters would be dull, so commonplace are the incidents to which they relate. As it is, they are by no means the least agreeable of their day, while those works on which he bestowed greater labour contain abundant evidence not merely of his command of language and grasp of his subject, but of the playful humour and scathing sarcasm which were alike characteristic of the man.

With such qualities as these, it is evidently not to his personal character that we must look for an explanation of the forgetfulness and evil repute into which he has fallen. The real reason is two-fold. First, he is, unfortunately with too good reason, suspected of occasional insincerity; and, secondly, the enthusiastic admiration with which he was once regarded has naturally brought about a corresponding reaction. As to the first point, it is impossible to examine his political career without seeing that, had he succeeded in obtaining a place of some sort early in life, the question as to the validity of general warrants would never have been raised, and his opposition to the tyranny of a parliamentary majority would scarcely have made itself heard. Could he have obtained wealth, luxury, and power, without the championship of a principle, his ends would undoubtedly have been secured. Circumstances, however, ruled otherwise. He became associated with the chiefs of the Opposition, and found himself thereby compelled not merely to support their policy, but to

give a practical turn to the political theories which they put forth. He would, perhaps, have been glad to avoid the necessity; but, like the soldier who goes into fight somewhat against his will, he did his work heroically when his blood was once fairly warmed. The result was that he, being in opposition, won to himself the whole of that personal popularity which the Ministry lacked, and the want of which made the Government for so many years the representation of anything but the feeling of the nation. Bute's administration was hated by the people, inasmuch as it represented the anti-English policy (using the phrase in its strictest sense) of a foreign sovereign. Wilkes, on the other hand, representing the purely English side of the quarrel, was adored by that class to whom the typical "John Bull" is the embodiment of all the cardinal virtues.

"The whirligig of time" has "brought about its revenges." Wilkes's extraordinary popularity has been succeeded by as unreasonable a contempt. Nor can we be altogether surprised at the fact. Public feeling and public thought ebb and flow always in great waves. Low Church gives place to High, and High to Broad. In the State, Whig follows Conservative, and Radical Whig with similar regularity. In literature the warm romanticism of Scott is followed by the cold microscopism of a later day; while in art the dash of the "Blanket School" is succeeded by the minuteness of *præ-Raphaelitism*. Thus also has it been with Wilkes. His popularity has vanished with the generation from which it sprang; and, looking back, we are apt to wonder that our fathers could see anything estimable in his character, or admirable in the work which he performed. Whether

this is fair either to him or to them, the following pages are an attempt to examine.

As became an apostle of liberalism, John Wilkes was an off-shoot of a good middle-class stock. During the reigns of Charles I. and James I., Edward Wilkes, the founder of the family, settled at Layton Beaudesert (now written Leighton Buzzard),<sup>1</sup> married, and brought up his family. Three sons were born to him, whom he named respectively Matthew, Mark, and Luke. His fourth child was a daughter, but to continue his evangelistic nomenclature, he called her Joan. On the authority of the Heralds the family is described as consisting of "persons of reputation and respect." With Matthew and Mark we have nothing to do. Luke, however, attained to a certain amount of consideration in the world. In 1670 he was made chief yeoman of the king's wardrobe; and, for the sake of being near his duties, settled in London, where he married and begat a son, whom he named, in compliance with the scriptural instincts of his family, Israel. To this son the courtly office did not descend. He engaged in trade, establishing himself for life in St. John's Square, Clerkenwell, near to that old gate of St. John which was afterwards to become so famous as the abiding-place of "Sylvanus Urban, gent." Here, like a prudent citizen, Israel Wilkes married, choosing with admirable discretion a certain Sarah Heaton, whose father, John Heaton, "Esquire," was a man of considerable wealth. Through her he became proprietor of a goodly estate, of which tradition records that Hoxton Square formed a part. Unlike her hus-

<sup>1</sup> The almshouses in Leighton Buzzard were built and partially endowed by Edward Wilkes, and the endowment was added to by his son Matthew.

band, Mrs. Wilkes was a strict dissenter, but being a woman of sound practical sense besides, she soon acquired a strong influence over him, though she never succeeded in weaning him from the faith of his forefathers. As became a "liberal," Israel sometimes went to "meeting," though at no time of his life did he declare himself a dissenter. He lived and died a good "Church and King" man. He was, moreover, no ascetic. His table was liberal, and his friends were numerous and intelligent. He kept a coach and six for his wife, who could thus hold her own amongst the "city madams," notwithstanding her unfashionable nonconformity. To this worthy pair five children were born. The eldest, named after his father, was never a successful man. Beginning life in the City of London, he speedily reduced his circumstances to so low a point, that he was compelled to emigrate to America, where he settled down and faded from public view. The third son, Heaton, like his elder brother, was unfortunate in business, but, unlike him, did not quit the country. He lingered on until 1803, when he died in Vere Street, Piccadilly, in very poor circumstances. In the same year the younger daughter of the family died, having chiefly distinguished herself by marrying and burying three husbands. The elder daughter had died six and thirty years before. She never married, having been disappointed in some early love affair which turned her brain. During the last few years of her life she never quitted her room in Hart Street, Bloomsbury, from which every ray of daylight was rigidly excluded, and in which all that was done was done by candlelight.

The second son of this rather melancholy family, was John Wilkes, in whose person appear to have

been centred all its fame, wit, and genius. He was born on the 17th October, 1727, and though nothing could ever be said in praise of his personal beauty, his brilliant parts were early the subject of remark, especially among those who were anxious to stand well with his mother. As he was the ugliest of her brood, she naturally idolized him, the primary consequence of which fact was that she insisted on his being educated in a more liberal fashion than was thought good enough for his brothers. Accordingly he was sent to school, first at Hertford, where he acquired little except good health and a knowledge of cricket; and then to Aylesbury, where a dissenting minister, named Leeson, kept a school in the vicarage-house. After a residence of some years with this pedagogue, he was removed altogether from school, and sent with a "bear-leader" to Leyden—then a more generally famous university than now. He remained here for the usual time, making fair progress, and displaying a great taste for classical studies. His Greek was neglected; but with Latin he had a more than respectable acquaintance. He took no degree, but quitting Leyden made, as became a young fellow of means, as extended a tour as the condition of Europe would permit. France, being then in what seemed its normal condition of war, was of course closed against him; but he was able to go through the Dutch provinces, and to see the Austrian Netherlands, and part of Germany, whence he returned to England, some time about the close of 1748. Beyond the pleasure of this journey, it seems to have produced little benefit. The chief point in connexion with it, which is of course duly recorded for the benefit of posterity, is that he made acquaintance

with that Baxter to whom reference has already been made.

While he was thus engaged, however, in disporting himself on the Continent, a plot was preparing against his happiness at home. Near to Layton Beaudesert is a little village called Bragenham, wherein a family not altogether unknown to fame had been settled since 1523. This was the family of the Meads, of which that Dr. Mead was a member, of whom Johnson observed that he "lived more in the broad sunshine of life than almost any man." At the time of Wilkes's birth, his mother and Mrs. Mead were on very affectionate terms. Both were dissenters, and both "sat under" the same preacher. Mrs. Mead "had one fair daughter and no more;" and, seeing that Mrs. Wilkes had sons, she not unnaturally became anxious for a closer connexion between the two families than one of mere friendship. In this desire Mrs. Wilkes fully shared, and the result was that the two mothers arranged a match between their children. Wisely enough for the success of their scheme, they kept their plans a profound secret; so that when John Wilkes went to Leyden, he and his destined bride were equally ignorant of the fate in store for them. He returned heart-whole to England, and was, by his mother's management, thrown constantly in the way of Miss Mead. She on her part, notwithstanding that she had had numerous suitors for her hand, had been kept free from all entanglements in expectation of this event. Matters having been thus skilfully prepared, the young people fell easily into the trap laid for them by their elders, and were married in October, 1749, when Wilkes was in his twenty-second, and his wife in her thirty-second year. As Wilkes's domestic life had

little or nothing to do with his political adventures, it may be convenient to sketch in this place the result of the judicious arrangement of these managing mothers.

The young couple remained quietly at Aylesbury until the winter set in, when they migrated to London, and by another blunder established themselves in the house of Mrs. Mead, a dreary dwelling in a court at the back of St. Sepulchre's Church. Here they stayed until August, when a daughter was born to them; but by this time the young husband had grown weary of the round of petty formalities and minute observances by which his life was hedged in. He sought, therefore, for a house in which he might establish himself, and shortly afterwards removed to Great George Street, Westminster, where he remained, with occasional absences, until within a few years of his death. Accustomed as he had been to the extreme of conventional respectability and dulness, it is no matter for surprise that he should have rushed into the opposite extreme as soon as he was free. The house to which he removed was a very costly one, situated in the most fashionable quarter of the town, and necessitated a rather extensive establishment. Into it he soon brought a host of friends, "keeping," according to a contemporary account, "a great deal of company, and giving frequent dinners and other entertainments." The "company" at these gatherings was more numerous than select, and the dissipated tribe whom he introduced to his wife did not help to heal the breach which his occasional infidelities had opened. What the class was to which his guests belonged may be guessed from the fact that the chief amongst them was Potter, the infamous son of the Archbishop of

Canterbury—a man so notorious for blasphemy that Churchill selected him as a model of wickedness second only to Warburton who

“With such an emphasis and grace  
Blasphemed e'en Potter kept our pace.”

Worthy companions for this man were found in Lord Sandwich, popularly known as “Jemmy Twitcher,” and Sir Francis Dashwood, whom his contemporaries uniformly represent as a model of cynical depravity. The talk of these and of some others of Wilkes’s friends was not unnaturally extremely distasteful to Mrs. Wilkes, with whose education particular pains had been taken, and whose character was fully formed before her marriage. Her remonstrances were, however, treated with contempt, the more so as they appear to have been marked by the superiority which her greater age seemed to authorize. At last further endurance became impossible; a separation was agreed upon, and a deed was prepared by which Wilkes secured to his wife an income of 200*l.* a year, and retained the charge of his daughter, to whom he was passionately attached. Mrs. Wilkes retired to her mother’s house in Red Lion Court, where she remained until her death in that placid retirement which best suited her tastes. Once only after this did she hold any communication with her husband. This was when, in the midst of his pecuniary embarrassments, he made an effort to obtain possession of the small remnant of her property which he had left to her. He sent confidential friends to beg her to resign her annuity. To these she turned a deaf ear. He wrote letter after letter asking for a personal interview. To these also she returned no answer. In desperation he appealed

at last to the law, and sued out a writ of *habeas corpus* against Mrs. Mead, whom he charged with detaining her daughter against her will. Mrs. Wilkes filed an affidavit in reply, supported by documentary evidence, which so satisfied the court, that protection was accorded to her under a heavy penalty against her husband. Henceforward all communication between them ceased. Mrs. Wilkes received her annuity regularly, but saw her husband no more. A curious rumour was afloat at the time of the separation, to the effect that it was caused by religious differences. It is characteristic of Wilkes that he should have thought it necessary to issue a grave contradiction, and that he should have published, years afterwards, a sort of feeble justification of the course he had pursued. His excuses, however, scarcely set the matter in a proper light. He owns that he married for money; or, in his own words, his marriage was "a sacrifice to Plutus rather than to Venus." All that he can say in defence of his marital conduct is that he was "an extremely civil and complaisant husband, rather cold, but extremely well-bred," as if "good breeding," whatever interpretation be put upon the phrase, could in any way atone to a wife for want of affection, accompanied by exposure to the grossest insult.

Whatever pleasures Wilkes may have found in domestic life, he now abandoned them for the broader field of politics. The times needed a reformer sorely. Corruption was rife in Church and State alike. The race of giants had, indeed, died out, and in its stead a brood of pygmies had come in; wherefore, instead of a reformer, the age produced only a demagogue;—instead of a Cromwell, a Wilkes, and instead of a Dryden a Churchill. The House of Commons was a notorious

haunt of corruption. Boroughs were openly bought and sold—some even advertised themselves for sale—and it was generally understood that the chief end of a seat in Parliament was a place. Into this corrupt world Wilkes now sought to enter, and at the general election of 1754 he presented himself to the electors of Berwick, by the advice of his disinterested friend, Potter. His address, though bearing signs of youth, is remarkable for the introduction of those claptrap phrases of which he afterwards made so persevering a use. There was, of course, a great deal about “the sacred cause of liberty,” about his “attachment to the constitution,” and about his own incorruptibility and resolution to treat the electors as though they were as incorruptible as himself. His sole ambition—on paper—was the service of his country ; his strongest determination not to bribe. Nevertheless, when the poll closed, he found himself in a minority ; and, on making up his accounts, with his pocket lighter by some three or four thousand pounds.

Returned to London, the first thing by which he was encountered was the anger of his wife, from whom he was not yet separated. To escape it he plunged fiercely into dissipation, gambled at the Dilettanti, dined with the players at the Beefsteak Club, and rushed vehemently into the wildest orgies of Medmenham Abbey,—the motto of which last institution—*fay ce que voudras*—he carried out to its full extent. This kind of life endured for three years, when another opportunity for entering public life presented itself. Potter, who then sat for Aylesbury, was appointed one of the Vice-Treasurers of Ireland, and was compelled in consequence to resign his seat in Parliament. To this seat, for family reasons, Wilkes aspired, and he

found his associate not unwilling to cede it to him, provided only that he could procure another for himself. By great good fortune, just at this moment, Sir Robert Henley, afterwards Lord Northington, who was then M.P. for Bath, was made Lord Keeper in the room of Lord Hardwick. Mr. Pitt at the same time wishing for a larger constituency than that of Oakhampton, which he then represented, retired from that borough, and presented himself at Bath. The new writ for Oakhampton was issued on the same day with that for Aylesbury; and Potter, on presenting himself at the former place, was returned without opposition, while Wilkes met with the same happy fate at the latter. The patriot had, however, scarcely intended to pay so high a price for the honour, which is said to have cost him not less than 7000*l.* His friends blamed his extravagance bitterly, and it reads rather oddly now to find them lamenting it chiefly on the ground that he could have bought a borough altogether for a smaller sum.

The price Wilkes paid for his seat, coupled with his luxurious way of living, produced the results which might have been expected. He got into debt, and applied first to his friend Potter for assistance. The faithful Potter introduced him to the Jews, and the Jews in turn made him acquainted with the mysteries of mortgages, bonds, and annuities. To meet the expenses thus entailed upon him, a further source of income became necessary. Accordingly, at the beginning of the political campaign, he attached himself assiduously to the leaders of the Liberal party, none of whom received greater attention from him than Lord Temple. His lordship rewarded those attentions, however, after a very disappointing fashion. He had

just been made Lord-Lieutenant of Buckinghamshire, and as Dashwood was compelled to retire from the colonelcy of the militia, he appointed Wilkes to the vacant post instead of a lucrative office.

The death of George II. in October, 1760, made little difference to the proceedings of our patriot. Consistently with the usual custom on the demise of the Crown, Parliament ought to have been at once dissolved, but the Ministry not having made the necessary "arrangements," through the suddenness of the king's death, it was resolved to permit its continued existence until brought to a close by the operation of the Septennial Act. In the short breathing space thus permitted, Wilkes prepared himself for re-election by all the means at his command. He gave dinners to his constituents every fortnight, and paid unremitting attention to all the inhabitants of the borough, not forgetting their wives and children. Besides the goodwill of the electors he relied, however, upon a more potent influence. One of his colleagues, Mr. Welbore Ellis, was a member of the Ministry, so that the government influence was upon his side. The families of Stanhope and Grenville entered into a friendly arrangement by which it was agreed that if the latter would not disturb the county, the former would not attempt to interfere with the borough, with the result that while Sir William Stanhope and Mr. Lowndes were returned for the county without opposition, Mr. Ellis (afterwards Lord Mendip) and Wilkes sat for Aylesbury under similar conditions. Wilkes had scarcely taken his seat before he recommenced his search after place, a course to which he was undoubtedly urged in a great measure by pecuniary necessity. The embassy to Constantinople first fell vacant by the resignation

of Sir James Porter. For this he applied, but a more powerful candidate arose in the person of the Hon. Henry Grenville, who had been governor of Barbadoes since 1747, and who was supported by Mr. Pitt and Lord Temple. Disappointed in this, he turned his eyes in another direction, and sought for the Governorship of Canada, which was then vacant. A like fate befell him in this attempt, as also in another which he made on the Turkish embassy four years later. This mission to Constantinople was the post on which he set his hopes for many years. Over and over again in his letters, he expresses his earnest desire that the Ministry would make use of him in this capacity, in which he believed that he could not merely have provided well for himself, but could have done good service to his country. Mr. Forster, in his life of Churchill, has chosen to say some very harsh things of Wilkes, and on no occasion has he expended more bitterness than in dealing with this hunt after promotion. The "liquorish ardour" with which patriot Wilkes "hunted after ambassadorships and chamberlainships" is the theme of a good deal more declamation than is at first intelligible. It can, indeed, only be explained by the eloquent writer's desire to exalt the poet at the expense of his allies, but it is questionable whether the much-abused patriot deserves all the harsh things which have been said of him. In our own day it is not thought an unpardonable sin for a partisan to accept office, or even for a ministry to cling to place with prehensile tenacity in the face of a hostile majority. Why, then, it may be asked, should Wilkes be so bitterly blamed for a similar course? It may be taken for granted that he wished to serve his country, and that he believed himself able to do so as well as,

if not better than, most of those by whom he was surrounded. The men who enjoyed the good things which the state provided were certainly superior neither in ability nor in morality to the patriot, and it is hard to say why so much fault should be found with a man who desired to replace them, and to offer his undeniable talents to the service of his country. Had fault been found with the manner in which these offers were pressed, it would be easy to understand the indignation which they excited. As, however, that indignation is confined to the offers of service themselves, it is impossible not to feel that it is wholly misplaced, and that it is extremely unlikely to produce any other effect than that of creating a strong suspicion as to the goodness of the cause which needs such arguments to support it.

This question may, however, be put wholly on one side, seeing that Wilkes' most strenuous efforts resulted only in disappointment. Wearied at last with long-deferred hope, he turned in another direction, and sought amidst the politics of his own country for those opportunities of distinction which fortune did not permit him to obtain elsewhere. The declaration of war against Spain in 1762 afforded him an opportunity of entering the lists in opposition to the ministry. Immediately after the rupture became publicly known, he published a pamphlet of "observations" on the question. Either from his inexperience in literary work, or from his want of knowledge of political matters, the pamphlet fell still-born from the press, producing no effect upon his circumstances at the time or his prospects in the future. Once having taken the pen, however, he found it hard to lay it down, and therefore adventured himself again in the field of politico-literary

warfare by the publication of an ironical dedication to Lord Bute of Ben Jonson's drama, "The Fall of Mortimer." This, though but the second in point of time, was by far the best in point of merit of all Wilkes' political writings. The English hated the Scotch minister most fervently ; the subject no less than the object of this dedication afforded a splendid opportunity for bitter and sparkling attack. This Wilkes did not fail to utilize. Bute's character is dexterously turned inside out, and the seamy side pitilessly exposed to the public gaze. Of course the *parvenu* Premier felt the satire—that he could not help—but he gave no sign of his anger. Nothing, indeed, came of it for some time, but Bute's was not a nature to forgive an enemy, and he treasured up his wrath until the moment for vengeance arrived. This was not far distant, and a few weeks brought retribution to the luckless author of "The Fall of Mortimer," a retribution the severity of which was felt none the less for the opportunity which it afforded the subject of dealing fresh blows at his opponent.

The first act of Bute, on obtaining power, had been to assemble around him a staff of "ready writers," whose pens might be always at his service. At the head of these were Smollett and another Scotchman named Malloch, better known by the name of Mallet, which he assumed on going to London. Both belonged to the tribe of literary hacks ; but Smollett's astonishing powers of humour, combined with his habitual industry and great general abilities, have won for him a place amongst the classic authors of this country. Mallet was a man of infinitely less power and greater idleness. The one incident by which he is chiefly remembered is his connexion with the publication of Boling-

broke's collected writings, concerning which Johnson made the well-known speech to the effect that the peer "had loaded a blunderbuss against Christianity, and had left half-a-crown to a beggarly Scotchman to pull the trigger." The speech was unjust enough perhaps, but it has sufficed to preserve the memory of Mallet better than any of his voluminous writings. True to the traditions of the Bohemian of literature, the first care of these worthies, on securing their capitalist, was to get him to establish a paper. This he agreed to do, and the result was the *Briton*. Its title was suggested by some words in the opening speech of George III. to his first Parliament. "Born and educated in this country," the king had said, "I glory in the name of Briton." His Majesty had written, in his own rough draft of the speech, that he gloried in the name of "Englishman." Bute's Scottish pride could not bear this, and he scratched through the obnoxious word to substitute "Britain," an orthography which his toadies servilely followed in the earlier numbers of the journal started to support his administration. The *Briton* had not appeared more than once or twice before its real character became manifest. One paper was not enough, however, for the ambition of Bute. A second was, therefore, started under the editorial care of Arthur Murphy, with the title of the *Auditor*. Like its compeer, it was slanderous without being brilliant, and tedious without being instructive. The consequence was precisely what might have been expected. Bute's cause was anything but popular in London, and the public obstinately refused to buy or to read journals devoted to his support, which had not even the merit of being either well-written or entertaining. Both

consequently ceased to exist after a few months—died, in a word, from inanition.

They did not, however, expire without raising up an enemy more powerful with the public than they themselves had been. In direct opposition to the *Briton*, Wilkes and the “satirical parson,” Churchill, started the *North Briton*, with but little help from the world outside. This journal instantly jumped into public favour. Its wit and power made it even more popular than did its attacks upon a minister whom the public had agreed in hating. The twelfth number had scarcely been reached before Wilkes was involved in a serious quarrel. That number contained an attack on certain pensions which the Government had recently granted, and amongst those objected to were the benefits bestowed upon Dr. Johnson and upon Home, the author of “*Douglas*.” There were, moreover, attacks upon Lord Talbot and Lord Lichfield, that upon the first of these noblemen being an elaborate sneer at his horsemanship, as displayed at the coronation. The matter was indeed sufficiently laughable and sufficiently irritating. Lord Talbot had, as Lord Steward, to ride into Westminster Hall in the presence of the king. His horse had been so carefully trained to back out of the royal presence, that when the moment for his entrance came it was found impossible to induce him to approach the sovereign otherwise than tail foremost. Such an accident naturally afforded a peg for satire, of which Wilkes availed himself to the fullest extent. Incensed at this freedom, which he chose to consider an outrage, Lord Talbot demanded, first by a note, and then by a message, that Wilkes should disavow all participation in the composition of the number. Wilkes, who was by no means indisposed for an

“affair” with a person in the position of Lord Talbot, replied with a simple refusal to acknowledge his lordship’s right to interrogate him upon the subject. The result was what Wilkes had anticipated—a challenge. The combatants met at Bagshot, and exchanged shots without injury to either party. When this solemn farce was over, Wilkes walked up to his opponent, and avowed himself the author of the obnoxious paper. Why he should not have done this in the first instance is not very intelligible, but his reticence appears to have been perfectly *en règle*, according to the laws of the duel as understood a century ago. Thus, at least, his antagonist appeared to think, for he is reported to have exclaimed, on receiving this confession, that “Mr. Wilkes was the noblest fellow God ever made,” a declaration which, of course, sets all doubt upon the matter at rest.

The career of the *North Briton* was not destined to be a long one. Its 44th number was published on the 2nd April, 1763, and the resignation of Lord Bute followed within a week. As it was designed only to procure the expulsion of this nobleman from office, it might naturally have been thought that his resignation would have been followed by the cessation of the paper. Wilkes himself appeared to regard this as a natural consequence, for immediately on the occurrence of this event, he started for Paris, whither he took his daughter for the purpose of completing her education. He returned, however, almost immediately, and one of his first acts on arriving in London was to call upon Lord Temple. He found his patron closeted with Pitt, considering an application from his brother, Mr. Grenville, for “permission to be elected for the town of Buckingham.” In the letter which conveyed

this request was enclosed a copy of the speech which the king was to deliver from the throne at the prorogation on the following day. Both the leaders of the Whig party were indignant at the tone of this speech, and one passage, which related to the King of Prussia, was found especially obnoxious. Wilkes's sentiments coincided with those of the chiefs under whom he fought, and an eager conversation followed. At its close Wilkes returned home, and from his recollection of it wrote an article which, with some few additions and improvements, formed the 45th number of the *North Briton*, which was published on the 23rd of April.

Number 45 of the *North Briton* was a fine specimen of the "smashing leader." The strength of its expressions and the vivacity of its denunciations would have suited Captain Shandon himself. The king's speech is pronounced "the most abandoned instance of ministerial effrontery ever attempted to be imposed on mankind. I am in doubt," the writer went on, "whether the imposition is greater on the sovereign or on the nation. Every friend of his country must lament that a prince of so many great and amiable qualities can be brought to give the sanction of his sacred name to the most odious meanness, and the most unjustifiable public declarations." The king had been made to say with respect to the King of Prussia that "the powers at war with his good brother had been induced to agree to such terms of accommodation as that great prince had approved." To this the *North Briton* makes the emphatic reply that "the infamous fallacy of the whole sentence is apparent to all mankind; for it is known that the King of Russia does not barely *approve*, but absolutely *dictated* as conqueror every article of the terms of peace." The

royal speech concluded in the following terms: "I depend upon your constant care to promote in your several counties that spirit of concord and that obedience to law which is essential to good order and to the happiness of my faithful subjects. It is your part to discourage every attempt of a contrary tendency; it shall be mine firmly to maintain the honour of my crown, and to protect the rights of my people." The comment of the *North Briton* was to the effect that the tax upon cider, which had been recently imposed, and which rendered private houses liable to search, was certain to excite a spirit not of concord but of discord, and a "spirit of liberty," to resist oppression "warranted by the spirit of the English Constitution." Finally Lord Bute's administration was described as "a weak, disjointed, incapable set. I will call them," adds the writer, "anything but ministers, by whom the favourite still meditates to rule this kingdom with a rod of iron."

The king's speech and the *North Briton* were considered together in the House. Lord North, then a Junior Lord of the Treasury, took the prosecution upon himself, and moved to vote the latter a scandalous and seditious libel "tending to foment treasonable insurrections." The debate continued until nearly two in the morning. "Mr. Pitt," says Horace Walpole in his letter to the Marquis of Hertford, "gave up the paper, but fought against the last words of the censure. I say Mr. Pitt, for indeed, like Almanzor, he fought almost singly, and spoke forty times; the first time in the day with much wit, afterwards with little energy." Martin, the member for Camelford, and Secretary of the Treasury under Lord Bute, said, in the course of the debate, looking at Wilkes, "whoever

stabs a reputation in the dark without setting his name is a cowardly, malignant, and slanderous scoundrel." These words he repeated, and though Wilkes bore the insult very quietly in the House, it ended as usual in a duel, in which Wilkes received a wound in the side. While this affair of honour was in hand, ministers consulted with the Attorney-General (Charles Yorke) and Sir Fletcher Norton, the Solicitor-General, who from the legal point of view confirmed the vote of the House of Commons, which declared the paper to be "an infamous and seditious libel, tending to inflame the minds and alienate the affection of the people from his Majesty, and incite them to traitorous insurrections against his Government." The answer was expected, and was instantly followed up by the issue of a general warrant directed against the "authors, printers, and publishers" of the paper. Under it, the printer, Leach, was seized by the messengers in the middle of the night. The sole evidence upon which this arrest was made, was that "somebody had told Carrington, the messenger, that Mr. Wilkes had been seen going into Leach's house." In spite of the inconclusive nature of this testimony, the poor printer was, with his workmen, apprentices, and servants, kept in custody for several days, and at last discharged, without examination or apology. On the same evening that Leach was dragged from his bed, the real printer of the paper, Kearsley, who was the only person specified by name in the warrant, was also arrested, with his servants. A third time the warrant was sent out, and a Mr. Balfe, with his workmen, was arrested. Their number brought up the total of persons apprehended on this single warrant to no fewer than forty-eight. The printers were privately examined before Lord

Halifax and Lord Egremont, and although all the evidence produced as to Wilkes's complicity in the affair was that he had been in the habit of giving orders for the printing, the warrant was issued a fourth time. The *animus* of the ministry is clear from the fact that Lord Egremont gave the messengers verbal orders to enter Wilkes's house even at midnight, and to arrest him and seize his papers. Happily, for their own credit, and for the comfort of the object of this persecution, they were more temperate than their masters, and waited until the morning. Then, however, they seized him at his own door, as he was about to enter the house. He demanded to see the warrant, and on finding that his name was not mentioned, refused to yield obedience to so informal a document. The door was opened, and they followed him into the house. Just at this moment a Mr. Alman, who afterwards edited Wilkes's letters and papers, came in, and the latter taking him aside, whispered the circumstances of his arrest, and begged him to go with all speed to Lord Temple, and explain the affair to him. Alman departed at once upon his errand, and Wilkes was carried off in charge of the messengers to the office of the Secretary of State. Lord Temple, immediately on hearing the fate of his *protégé*, despatched Alman to his attorney with a letter containing instructions to sue out a writ of *habeas corpus* to bring Wilkes before the Court of Common Pleas.

The proverbial delays of the law did not in this instance interfere with the execution of justice. The attorney went at once to the court, applied for, and obtained the writ. Two friends of Wilkes, Walsh, then M.P. for Worcester, and Hopkins, afterwards M.P. for Dartmouth, heard the application, and im-

mediately went to Lord Halifax, of whom they asked leave to see the prisoner. After some little demur this was permitted, but Webb, the Solicitor to the Treasury, remained in the room during the interview. In his hearing Wilkes was informed of the application for the writ, and the intelligence was immediately conveyed to the Secretaries of State. They were at first indisposed to believe that such a course had been adopted, but becoming convinced after a time, they transferred Wilkes from the custody of the messengers who had arrested him, to that of two others to whom they entrusted a warrant for his imprisonment in the Tower. Thither he was at once taken, so that the messengers who had effected the first arrest, when called upon to answer the writ of *habeas*, replied that "they had him not in their custody." Another writ was accordingly issued, addressed "to the Constable, and so forth, of the Tower of London," which had the desired effect. Wilkes had hitherto been kept a close prisoner, denied to his friends, and treated with the utmost severity. His papers had been seized and his house half stripped in the search for them, under the authority of the Solicitor of the Treasury and the Under Secretary of State. He was now (Tuesday, 2nd May, 1763), brought to the bar of the Court of Common Pleas, before which he pleaded his cause in person with great ability. He protested his love and veneration for the king, and he declared that the writer of "No. 45," had in no way attacked the Sovereign, but only his Ministers; but as he was not on his trial for the publication of the paper, he very wisely said nothing as to whether he was or was not the writer. His counsel, Serjeant Glynne,<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> An ancestor of Mrs. W. E. Gladstone.

also spoke with great eloquence against the validity of the conviction. The court, after hearing the arguments, took time to consider its judgment, and remanded Wilkes to the Tower. Orders were, however, given that he should no longer be treated as a close prisoner, which relieved him from the constant and oppressive presence of the warders, from the absence of his friends, and from the enforced abstinence from pen and ink.

The court had adjourned until Friday. In the meanwhile, at the solicitation of Lord Egremont, the king commanded that he should be deprived of his colonelcy in the Bucks Militia. Lord Temple, who conveyed this insulting order to Wilkes, could not refrain from "expressing the concern he felt in the loss of an officer, by his deportment in command, endeared to the whole corps." On the appointed day Wilkes came up for judgment, and the Lord Chief Justice (Pratt), delivered the decision of the Court in an elaborate address. In the course of it he pointed out that the warrant of a Secretary of State was no more than the warrant of a justice of the peace; and that, since no magistrate had a right to issue a warrant without stating the crime of which the person against whom it was directed, was accused, the warrant in question would have been illegal but for the existence of a few precedents. So also it was unnecessary to specify in the warrant the particular passages of the *North Briton*, to which objection was taken, since it by no means came under the cognizance of the magistrate, but was referable to a jury alone. On the question of privilege, however, his decision was different. The only grounds on which a Member of Parliament could be arrested were treason, felony, and a breach of the peace.

Wilkes was not charged with any one of these offences, but simply with libel. That, in the sight of the law, was merely a misdemeanour, and consequently did not come under any of those definitions. Its tendency at most was to disturb the peace, and therefore it could not be sufficient to abrogate the privilege of Parliament. The Court unanimously concurring in this decision, the discharge of Wilkes was ordered. He made a short and manly speech of thanks to the Court, which moved the admiration even of those who were most opposed to him. Amongst those in the Court who were not his enemies, and who formed the greater part of the audience, the effect was very different. From them a shout of applause went up, which not all the efforts of the ushers availed to stay. His journey home to Great George Street was a triumphal progress, and the people wound up the day with illuminations, bonfires, and other rejoicings," which latter phrase may perhaps be interpreted to mean, rather more drink than usual.

No sooner had Wilkes returned to Great George Street, than he wrote a letter to Lords Egremont and Halifax, in which he stated that during his imprisonment in the Tower his "house had been robbed," and that he was "informed that the stolen goods were in possession of one or both of their lordships. I therefore insist," Wilkes went on, "that you do forthwith return them." This letter, which the Rev. John Selby Watson, now of Broadmoor, describes as "impudent," was seen and approved by Serjeant Glynne and Lord Temple, and at their suggestion was printed and distributed by thousands. Two or three days afterwards the two peers answered the assault of Wilkes, in a precisely similar way—by a letter, that is

to say—in which they accused him of being the author of “an infamous and seditious libel, tending to inflame the minds and alienate the affections of the people from his Majesty.” Wilkes’s bluntness in speaking of the process by which he had lost his papers as robbery, and his description of those papers as “stolen goods,” the lords described as “indecent and scurrilous,” and he was told in conclusion, that those papers which were not necessary to his conviction would be restored to him. Wilkes had his adversaries on the hip, as he was perfectly well aware, and his answer was at once courageous and patriotic. He protested against the “Billingsgate” of the ministers, and wound up a spirited letter by saying that he, “feared neither their prosecution nor their persecution, and that he would assert the security of his own house, the liberty of his person, and every right of the people, not so much for his own sake as for the sake of every one of his English fellow-subjects.”

Whilst the Government was preparing for the prosecution of Wilkes in the Commons, another scheme against his peace had been hatched in the Lords. Some time before Wilkes had been admitted to the select society which turned the lovely Abbey of Medmenham into a temple of Venus Pandemos. Some details of the blasphemous and filthy orgies of these so-called “Franciscans”—a name which they assumed in honour of their founder, Sir Francis Dashwood—will be found in the third and fourth volumes of a curious and rather scarce work called, “Chrysal, or the Adventures of a Guinea.” Here it must suffice to say that the blasphemies and obscenities of these burlesques of Christianity, were simply indescribable. For the gratification of this agreeable society, Wilkes wrote an

elaborate parody of Pope's "Essay on Man," to which he gave the title of "An Essay on Woman," adding notes of a peculiarly filthy kind, to which he appended the name of Warburton, in ridicule, of course, of the notes added by that prelate to his edition of Pope. Great precautions were taken that no other copies than the twelve destined for the "Monks of Medmenham" should be struck off; but, as might have been anticipated, it was found impossible to prevent a proof from getting into circulation. The enemies of Wilkes got scent of the matter. One Kidgell, who is called by Walpole, "a dirty dog of a parson," who was known as an embezzler of trust-monies, and whose character may be guessed by the fact that he was chaplain to that Earl of March afterwards notorious as the "wicked Duke of Queensberry," suborned one of the printers to procure for him a copy of this precious work. This he handed over to Lord Sandwich, who only a short time before, had been expelled from the Beefsteak Club—not the most straight-laced of associations—for blasphemy. As soon as Sandwich had obtained possession of this document, he hastened with it to Warburton, whose consent to take part in the prosecution was readily obtained; though he is said to have expressed his disinclination to appear in the matter, "unless the king desired it as for his service."

The scene which followed was an edifying one. "It is a great mercy," wrote Lord Chesterfield, a few days afterwards, "that Mr. Wilkes, the intrepid defender of our rights and liberties, is out of danger; and it is no less a mercy that God hath raised up the Earl of Sandwich to vindicate true religion and morality." In this character Lord Sandwich read the greater part of the poem, though it is impossible to avoid the suspicion

that he enjoyed, quite as much as any one, both it and the extravagantly libellous notes inscribed with the name of Warburton.<sup>3</sup> "I never before heard the devil preach against sin," said Lord Le Despenser (late Sir Francis Dashwood), to a neighbour. In spite of the incongruity, Sandwich persisted in his reading until

<sup>3</sup> What Lord Sandwich was has been told by Churchill in a "character" which, save for the meanness of its subject, might well compare with some of the best of Dryden's:—

From his youth upwards to the present day  
 When vices more than years have marked him grey ;  
 When riotous excess with wasteful hand  
 Shakes life's frail glass, and hastens each ebbing sand,  
 Unmindful from what stock he drew his birth,  
 Untainted with one deed of real worth,  
 Lothario holding honour at no price,  
 Folly to folly added, vice to vice,  
 Wrought sin with greediness and sought for shame  
 With greater zeal than good men seek for fame.

Where (reason left without the least defence)  
 Laughter was mirth, obscenity was sense,  
 Where impudence made decency submit,  
 Where noise was humour, and where whim was wit,  
 Where rude untemper'd licence had the merit  
 Of liberty, and lunacy was spirit,  
 Where the best things were ever held the worst,  
 Lothario was with justice always first.

To whip a top, to knuckle down at taw,  
 To swing upon a gate, to ride a straw,  
 To play at push-pin with dull brother peers,  
 To belch out catches in a porter's ears,  
 To reign the monarch of a midnight cell,  
 To be the gaping chairman's oracle,  
 Whilst in most blessed union rogue and whore,  
 Clap hands, huzza and hiccup out, encore,

\* \* \* \* \*

To coin newfangled wagers and to lay 'em,  
 Laying to lose and losing not to pay 'em ;  
 Lothario on that stock which Nature gives  
 Without a rival stands though *March yet lives.*"

Lord Lyttelton begged that it might be stopped. "The House," says Walpole, "was amazed; nobody ventured even to ask a question; so it was easily voted everything you please, and a breach of privilege into the bargain." Lord Temple then objected to the manner of obtaining the paper, and Bishop Warburton, as much shocked at infidelity as Lord Sandwich had been at obscenity, said "the blackest fiends in hell would not keep company with Wilkes, if he should arrive there." On the day following (Friday, 18th November), Walpole writes again, "Wilkes is thought in great danger (from the wound received in his duel with Martin); instead of keeping him quiet, his friends have shown their zeal in visiting him, and himself has been all spirits and riot, and sat up in his bed the next morning to correct the press for to-morrow's *North Briton*. His *bons-mots* are all over the town, but too gross, I think, to repeat. Notwithstanding Lord Sandwich's masked battery, the tide runs violently for Wilkes, and I do not find people in general so inclined to excuse his lordship as I was. One hears nothing but stories of the latter's impiety and the concert he was in with Wilkes on the subject. Should either hero die, the Bishop may doom him whither he pleases, but Wilkes will pass for a saint and martyr." Public feeling was obviously on the side of Wilkes, and even those whose official position required them to observe a certain restraint in their utterances, felt deeply the incongruity of placing the defence of the virtue and morality of England in such hands as those of Lord Sandwich and his colleagues. In spite, therefore, of popular feeling, the prosecution was ordered. The *North Briton* was burned by the hangman in Cheapside, on Saturday, the 4th December,

Pitt having given up Wilkes as “the blasphemer of his God, and the libeller of his king.” The mob of the city were enraged on the occasion, and though they did not actually make a riot, showed their temper very plainly. “They were armed,” says Walpole, “with that most bloody instrument, the mud out of the gutter; they hissed in the most murderous manner; broke Mr. Sheriff Harley’s coach glass in the most frangent manner; scratched his forehead so that he is forced to wear a little patch in the most becoming manner; and obliged the hangman to burn the paper with a link, though fagots were prepared to execute it in a more solemn manner. Numbers of gentlemen from windows and balconies encouraged the mob, who in about an hour and a half were so undutiful to the ministry as to retire without doing any mischief.” On the Monday following, another proof of Wilkes’s popularity was afforded. He had brought an action against Mr. Wood, the Under Secretary of State, for seizing his papers under the general warrant. It was tried before Chief Justice Pratt, and the jury having by his direction given a verdict for the plaintiff, assessed the damages at 1000*l.* On the day following, the printers recovered in a similar action no less than 400*l.*; tolerably clear evidence, it may be thought, of the state of public feeling.

During this time Wilkes was still suffering from his wound. He had been summoned to attend in his place in the House, and sent in certificates of illness signed by Brocklesby—the friend of Johnson and of most men of eminence of that day. The ministry professed to be dissatisfied with his report, and commissioned Heberden and Hawkins to visit him and report on his case. Wilkes refused to see them, but sent for two

Scotchmen, Duncan and Middleton, after which, knowing the power of the speaker, he quietly made his escape to France. In his absence he was convicted in the Court of King's Bench of being the author of the “Essay on Woman,” and on the following day the House of Lords, on the motion of Lord Sandwich, agreed to a vote that “it appearing” that Wilkes was the author, he should be attached by the usher. Shortly afterwards the question of the general warrant and of privilege were brought before the House of Commons, and the ministry contrived to score a victory—the motion for the formal expulsion of Wilkes, being, however, carried by so small a majority, and with so much difficulty, that it was almost worse than a defeat. He had, a short time before, been called upon to receive the judgment of the court, and failing to appear was outlawed. Under such circumstances his connexion with English politics seemed to be finally severed.

The pause was, however, only temporary. He made an attempt to induce his colleague on the *North Briton*—Churchill—to join him in Paris, and from that secure retreat to attack the English Government. The plan, however, fell through, and Wilkes devoted himself with his customary energy to the pursuit of pleasure. He travelled through the south of France, and afterwards in Italy for two years; but when, towards the end of 1766, the Duke of Grafton became minister, he turned his thoughts once more towards that country which, whatever his faults may have been, he devotedly loved, and, through that minister, solicited the clemency of the king. His appeal was unnoticed, whereupon he published a second, which met with a similar reception. Another plan, it was evident, must be adopted. Accordingly he returned to England, and offered him-

self as a candidate for the City of London at the approaching election. This was carrying the war into the enemy's camp, in truth. Broken in fortune, an outlaw, and with two convictions recorded against him, should his outlawry be reversed,—opposed on one side by the crown and the ministry, and supported only by the favour of the people,—there is a dash of heroism in his position at this moment which it is impossible not to admire. His letter of submission to the king had been written on the 4th of March, 1768, and his appeal to the citizens was dated the 10th of the same month. With regard to the former, he was guilty of a serious error of judgment. He caused it to be presented, not by a member of the court, but by a footman, who left it at the palace gate. It was, of course, received when tendered after that fashion rather as a defiance than as a submission, and the ill-feeling with which he was regarded was consequently greatly increased. Had peace been made with him now, an important victory might have been gained, and the ministry might have been saved much of the odium which attached to their subsequent proceedings. No further advances were, however, made on either side, and the struggle went on. Wilkes knew that his outlawry was no bar to his sitting in Parliament, and he trusted in the people for his triumph. He was doomed to fail in his first attempt. The election for the city took place on the 16th and when the poll closed, his name was lowest on the list of candidates. Baffled, but not dispirited, he tried the county of Middlesex, where he was successful by a large majority against two gentlemen of property and hereditary interest.

The triumph was not unmixed with annoyance. A week before the day of the second election, Wilkes

wrote to the solicitor to the Treasury, announcing his intention of appearing during the next term in the Court of King's Bench. He had no sooner surrendered than the Attorney-General (Thurlow) moved for his instant committal on his outlawry. Sergeant Glynne, who always acted as Wilkes' counsel, moved in reply for a writ of error; and Lord Mansfield, with the concurrence of the rest of the judges, decided that they could not commit upon a voluntary surrender. Both parties were dismissed, but Wilkes was arrested on the day preceding the election, on a writ of *capias utlagatum*, and lodged in the King's Bench Prison. From this place he dated his letter of thanks to the electors of Middlesex on the 5th of May. The argument in the matter of his outlawry was heard upon the 7th, and two days afterwards it was finally reversed. The judgment of Lord Mansfield on that occasion is confessedly one of the finest addresses which even he ever delivered, and breathes throughout a spirit of sterling integrity, and of manly determination to do his duty as a judge "without fear, favour, or affection." The other judges followed, but their rougher and more barren periods failed to produce the effect upon the listeners which was wrought by the graceful and polished style of Mansfield. Such, indeed, was the contrast, that Wilkes, turning to a friend, likened the delivery of one of them to "a draught of hog-wash after a bottle of champagne." These proceedings were followed by attempts to overthrow the verdicts in the cases of libel. As they turned chiefly if not solely upon matters of form, such as the substitution of the word *tenor* for *purport* in the information, the objections were overruled, and the court proceeded to sentence. Wilkes had already been in prison for two

months. The sentence, therefore, for reprinting and republishing "No. 45" was ten months' imprisonment and a fine of 500*l.*, while for the "Essay on Woman" the same fine was inflicted, together with an imprisonment for twelve months. He was also required to find sureties for his good behaviour during the next seven years.

Wilkes might now, indeed, had he so chosen, have made his peace with the government. Negotiations on the subject were opened with him with the knowledge and consent of the Duke of Grafton, but he rejected the one condition upon which terms were offered. He had threatened to petition the House of Commons with reference to his case, and this the government foresaw would necessarily involve a discussion of all the transactions of the late Parliament. The ambassador of the government proposed, therefore, that he should withdraw this petition, promising that upon his so doing he should be allowed to take his seat unmolested. Wilkes, however, magnified his threat into a national pledge, and refused compliance. The petition was consequently presented by Sir John Mawbey, and was received as a fresh declaration of war.

In the meanwhile the people were not idle. On the 18th of May they assembled in great numbers round the King's Bench Prison, where their idol was confined, and made a violent disturbance. The magistrates of the county read the Riot Act, but as the people did not disperse, they sent for troops. A detachment came down, but still the mob remained, whereupon the soldiers fired upon the people, of whom one was killed, and a great number were wounded. A letter from Lord Weymouth, the Secretary of State, was known to be in existence, exhorting the magistrates to firm-

ness in the discharge of their duty should any difficulty arise on account of the popular regard for Wilkes ; and after the 10th of May the Secretary at War, Lord Barrington, wrote a letter of thanks, in the name of the king, to the officers and soldiers who had been engaged in quelling the riot. By some means Wilkes obtained possession of these letters, and immediately sent copies to the newspapers, with some prefatory remarks in which he termed the unhappy affair a “massacre.” If his persistent opposition to the administration had not made him hated before, this attack would have sufficed to do so. A signal punishment was speedily resolved upon, and as speedily it was put into operation. He was summoned to the bar of the House, and called upon to answer for these remarks. They were voted libellous, and their author was expelled from Parliament. His popularity, however, only increased. Fine, imprisonment, expulsion—all seemed in the eye of the mob the signs of a genuine martyrdom for liberty. The cry of “Wilkes and liberty,” words which had become almost synonymous—was everywhere heard. To this popular enthusiasm must be ascribed the triumph which now awaited the demagogue. A new election for Middlesex was ordered, and Wilkes was returned without opposition. On the following day the House declared him incapable of sitting in that Parliament. A third election was ordered, and again Wilkes triumphed. His only opponent was a Mr. Dingley, who failed to find even a single freeholder to nominate him. That election was likewise declared void, but the freeholders of Middlesex, having once entered into a struggle with the Parliament, repeated their choice a fourth time. A candidate was put forward on the side of the government

—a Mr. Luttrell, but he obtained 296 votes only against 1143 given to Wilkes. The House declared Mr. Luttrell duly elected, in spite of petition and precedent. Against this decision the people protested vehemently, nor was the opposition in both Houses less vigorous. Lord Chatham, who never loved the man though he had availed himself of his services, supported the principle for which he contended with all the eloquence at his command, declared that he represented the best parts of the English constitution, and while paying due deference to the ability of the majority, declared his earnest conviction that “the House of Lords was privileged to interfere in the case of an invasion of the people’s liberties, and that the case of the electors of Middlesex *was* such an invasion.” Petition and remonstrance were alike unavailing. A search for precedents was instituted, but one only was found which in any way applied to the case. That was the notorious case of Walpole, who, having been expelled the House in 1711, for breach of trust and notorious corruption in his office of Secretary at War, was voted to be incapable of election to the Parliament then sitting. In his case, however, a precedent was established which was not followed in that of Wilkes. Walpole was re-elected, but was judged incapable of sitting. His opponent was not, however, seated, the election being simply declared void. Luttrell in the latter case took his seat in spite of all opposition, and the ministry contented itself with standing on the defensive, paying no heed to the remonstrances which were addressed to them, and trusting to time to destroy the unpopularity of which they were only too conscious.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> It is not very gratifying to those who have been in the habit of reverencing Johnson’s “sturdy independence” to know that he de-

Wilkes's imprisonment was not, meanwhile, an altogether painful or inglorious captivity. He was in gaol, it is true, but the place of his confinement was a debtor's and not a criminal prison. His friends could see him whenever they pleased, and except that he was prevented from going outside the walls, there was little restraint upon his movements. The people made him their idol, and for the whole term of his incarceration, vied with each other in demonstrations of admiration and respect. He was known to be in debt—a subscription was opened to discharge his liabilities, and in a few weeks 20,000*l.* were raised to pay them and the heavy fines which had been imposed. The Society for the support of the Bill of Rights—a Society improvised on the spur of the moment—presented him with 300*l.*, and other considerable sums of money, while gifts of plate and household goods were daily conveyed to him. Outside the prison walls, men of all parties and of all ranks contended for the privilege of serving him, and for the pleasure of celebrating his praise. His name was everywhere heard coupled with the word so often upon his tongue, "Liberty," or with the number of that famous *North Briton*, which had first drawn upon him the anger of the ministry. In every shop his portrait or his bust was to be seen, while half the innkeepers in the kingdom pulled down the effigies of the Marquis of Granby or the Red Lion, to substitute for them the well-known features of the "squinting demagogue." These were, however, merely private honours. Public rewards were not far off. In 1769, he was elected by a trium-

fended the government on this question in a pamphlet called "The False Alarm." He may possibly have had a grudge against Wilkes, however, since he had attacked his pension in the *North Briton*.

phant majority, alderman of the ward of Farringdon Without, and thus commenced his connexion with the municipal government of the City of London—a connexion severed only by death.

From this time forward the career of Wilkes becomes one of uninterrupted good fortune, and of nearly proportionate dulness. He became Sheriff in 1771, Lord Mayor in 1774, and was elected again for Middlesex in the same year. It was whilst holding the former office that Wilkes lent his support to one of the greatest reforms with which any public man has been associated. Previous to the year 1771, the proceedings of Parliament were conducted with a pretence of the most rigid secrecy. To publish the debates was penal—the House resenting all attempts to make the world familiar with its discussions as a breach of privilege. The *Gentleman's Magazine* published a sort of monthly *résumé* of the most important, as the debates of the “Senate of Great Lilliput. It was for the purpose of reporting for this series that Johnson sat for so many nights in the Strangers' Gallery of the House. Boswell says that “his [Johnson's] composition of them began November 19th, 1740, and ended February 23rd, 1742-43.” On which statement of Boswell's, Mr. Croker observes that “Boswell must mean the *sole and exclusive* composition by Johnson began at this date; because, as we have seen, he began to be employed on these debates in 1738. I, however, see abundant reason to believe that he wrote them from the time they assumed the Lilliputian title, and even the introduction to this new form is evidently his; and when Mr. Boswell limits Johnson's share to the 23rd February, 1743, he refers to the date of the debate itself, and not to that of the

report, for the debates of the Gin Act (certainly reported by Johnson), which took place in 1743, were not concluded in the magazine till February, 1744. So that, instead of two years and nine months, according to Mr. Boswell's reckoning, we have, I think, Johnson's own evidence that he was employed in this way for near six years." These said reports were not, however, very trustworthy. Johnson never pretended that they were absolutely verbatim reports, and as soon as he discovered that they were believed to be such, he wrote no more, "for he would not be accessory to the propagation of falsehood." Murphy says, however, that in reply to the remark that he had dealt out reason and eloquence with an equal hand to both parties, Johnson replied, "That is not quite true, I saved appearances tolerably well, but I took care that the whig dogs should not have the best of it." His work was sometimes too good for the persons to whom it was ascribed, though perhaps their friends did not think so. At all events Dr. Maty, in his edition of the life and works of Lord Chesterfield, published three of Johnson's speeches as those of the great Stanhope. In the *London Magazine*, the debates appeared as the proceedings of the "Political Club," but they were not more authentic than those in the *Gentleman's Magazine*. In the year 1771, however, notes of the speeches, with the names of the speakers, were, at Wilkes's instigation, published in several of the journals. This breach of ancient order instantaneously excited the wrath of the House, and on the motion of Colonel Onslow, two printers were ordered to attend at the bar. They did not appear, and a motion having been carried to take them into custody, the attempt to execute it was resisted. Meanwhile

the offence of which they had been guilty, was repeated by several other printers, against each of whom Colonel Onslow made a similar complaint. A minority of the members saw that the public demanded reports, and that it was better that they should be supplied than that Parliament itself should become unpopular. They, therefore, put into execution all the forms of delay with which parliamentary practice had made them familiar. The whole arsenal of adjournments, amendments, and similar excuses for shelving the obnoxious question was brought to bear. No fewer than twenty-three divisions took place, and the discussion lasted on one occasion until after four in the morning. Nevertheless the majority triumphed, and the printers against whom complaint was made were ordered to attend. Two of them were reprimanded on the appointed day; one, having made submission, was discharged. A fourth attended, but was called away, and afterwards wrote to the Speaker, questioning the authority of the House and refusing obedience to its order. A few days afterwards, Wheble, the printer, for whose apprehension a reward had been offered, wrote to the Speaker. In his letter he inclosed a legal opinion on his case, and announced his determination to yield no obedience but to the laws of the land. On the following day he was arrested by a brother printer, in virtue of the proclamation, and taken before Mr. Alderman Wilkes. True to his reading of the law, Wilkes immediately discharged the prisoner, and bound him over to prosecute the printer who had arrested him for assault and false imprisonment. Not content with this, the alderman wrote to Lord Halifax as Secretary of State, informing him that Wheble had been arrested within his jurisdiction, by a person

who was neither constable nor peace officer of the city, and for no legal offence, "in direct violation of the rights of an Englishman and of the chartered privilege of a citizen of this metropolis," and closing with an intimation that he had at once discharged him.

The matter speedily assumed a graver aspect. Another printer, one Miller, having been ordered into custody by the House, a messenger, armed with the Speaker's warrant, arrested him in his own shop. Instead of submitting, Miller sent for a constable, and gave the messenger into his custody on a charge of assault. The matter was carried before the magistrates then sitting at the Mansion House—the Lord Mayor, Mr. Alderman Oliver, and Mr. Alderman Wilkes. Miller made his charge, the messenger produced the Speaker's warrant, and the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms claimed both the messenger and his prisoner. The Lord Mayor at once discharged the printer on the ground that the messenger was neither constable nor peace officer, and that the warrant had not been backed by a magistrate of the city. Miller's charge was then investigated, and the messenger, having refused to give bail, was committed under the joint warrant of the three magistrates. The controversy thus became an open warfare between the City of London and the House of Commons, or rather between the civil rights of the printers, and the privileges of Parliament. The contumacious magistrates were ordered to attend the House, the Lord Mayor and Mr. Oliver, both being members in their places, and Wilkes at the bar. The latter, instead of appearing, wrote to the Speaker claiming to attend in his place as Member for Middlesex. At the first ap-

pearance of the former, the Lord Mayor defended himself by the rights and privileges of the city, and claimed to be heard by counsel as to the jurisdiction of the metropolis. This boon, after much debate, was conceded to him and to Mr. Alderman Oliver. As to Wilkes the proceedings were abandoned. His popularity was so great that the administration feared to attack him. He was ordered to attend at the bar on the 8th April, but the ministry moved the adjournment of the House for the Easter Recess until the 9th, a subterfuge by which the prime mover of these troubles escaped all further molestation. With the other culprits the case was different. The Lord Mayor refused on the adjourned debate to be heard by counsel, but having read the charters of the city and the oaths of offices, appealed to the sense of the House to know if he could have acted differently. Mr. Oliver told the ministry that he gloried in what he had done, that he cared nothing for the punishment which he knew awaited him, that he "expected little from their justice," and that he "defied their power." A long debate followed, and at half-past three in the morning a warrant was made out for his commitment to the Tower, on the ground of a breach of privilege. A similar course was adopted with the Lord Mayor. He was, indeed, offered the privilege of remaining in the custody of the Sergeant-at-Arms, but he declined the exemption, and was carried off to bear his friend Oliver company. All these proceedings had not taken place without much popular excitement. The civic magistrates were attended to the House by immense mobs, and on the last occasion the crowd proceeded to acts of violence against the ministerial members. Several were pelted with mud and stones; Charles Fox and his

brother Stephen had their carriages injured ; and the coach in which Lord North came down to the House was broken to pieces, he himself escaping only with his life. On leaving the House, the Lord Mayor found a singularly different reception awaiting him. The horses were taken from his carriage by the crowd, who dragg'd him to the Mansion House, and would have rescued him from custody, but from his own adroitness in assuring them that he was simply going home. His imprisonment did not last long. Six weeks after, Parliament was prorogued, and the city magistrates were set free, to be escorted to the Mansion House with demonstrations of popular enthusiasm, similar to those which had greeted them on their last public appearance. Their triumph was complete. From that time to the present the reporting of Parliamentary debates has become a recognized part of the business of the country, and has been, on the whole, one of the most beneficent reforms of the last century.

On two other occasions Wilkes took a prominent part in politics. At the general election in 1774, when in company with his ancient defender, Serjeant Glynne, he came forward for Middlesex, he distinguished himself by his advocacy of the plan of requiring pledges from candidates. This election, according to Sir Erskine May,<sup>6</sup> was the first in which this custom prevailed. It may, in part, have arisen from the publicity which was then beginning to be given to the debates in Parliament and in part because it exalted the people as distinguished from their representatives. Whatever the reason, Wilkes became an ardent supporter of the plan and volunteered for himself and for his fellow-

<sup>6</sup> "Constitutional History of England," vol. i. p. 444.

candidate, one of the most stringent tests ever applied to a would-be M.P. This is scarcely the place to discuss the question whether these pledges are or are not desirable. Seeing, however, that so many of the ablest men in and out of Parliament, have condemned the principle, that Burke positively refused to submit to it; and that its practical tendency is to remove the function of the Legislature from representatives to their constituents, it is impossible to credit Wilkes with the display of any great judgment on this point, whatever opinion may be formed of his honesty, or of the zeal for liberty which he showed in his contest with the ministry. After this election the part which he took in politics was comparatively unimportant. He distinguished himself, however, by one feat in 1782. The ministry who had conducted the American war had long been increasing in unpopularity, and were compelled at last to resign. Thereupon Wilkes introduced a motion to expunge from the records of the House the obnoxious resolution of 1769. With little difficulty this motion was carried, and thus the top stone was put to the edifice of his political life. Henceforward he considered himself "a fire burnt out," and he finally retired from Parliament at the dissolution of 1790. Eleven years before he had obtained the lucrative office of Chamberlain to the City, and to the duties of this post he confined his attention during the few remaining years of his life. He died at the age of 70, in 1797.

During the latter years of his life Wilkes was comparatively free from the pecuniary embarrassments which had embittered his earlier days. He lived, however, up to the extreme limit of his income, and kept

three establishments out of the profits of his place in the corporation. In 1790 he gave up his house in Great George Street, and removed to Grosvenor Square, where he died. His country house was at Sandown, in the Isle of Wight, and there he spent a good deal of his time. Besides these he had a house at Kensington Gore, which he maintained for a less reputable purpose. The consequence of this extravagance was precisely what might have been expected. In his will he disposed of his houses and furniture and bequeathed legacies amounting to something under 3500*l.*, but when his executors had paid his debts, they found that the total amount of his property was not more than a fifth of that sum. His only legitimate daughter found means to maintain the establishment in Grosvenor Square for five years after the death of her father, but suddenly died there in 1802. She is described as having been a woman of remarkable abilities and of the highest attainments. The esteem in which she was held by her father, her own letters and the universal testimony of her friends bear out this character to the fullest extent. His illegitimate daughter, Harriet, who bore his name, is said to have been of a similarly amiable character, and of equal attainments.

Besides his translations from the classics and his political pamphlets, he has left no literary memorial of his fame. He began a History of England, and received a fair number of subscriptions to the work. It never, however, went farther than the introduction, which is not of a character to incline the reader to regret its discontinuance. Churchill constituted him by his will his literary executor, and for several years his letters contain allusions to the projected edition of

the works of that poet. He contrived, however, to write no more than a few miserable notes, which do as little credit to the poet as to his commentator. By way, perhaps, of atoning for this neglect, he set up a votive urn to the memory of his friend in the garden of his house at Sandown, on the pedestal of which was inscribed “Carolo Churchill, amico jucundo, poetæ acri, civi optimè, de patriâ merito, p. Johannes Wilkes, 1765.” Unfortunately the column was as perishable as the friendship it was erected to commemorate, and it has passed into the limbo of worthless things. It was, however, on his speeches that Wilkes was inclined to rest his fame. These were carefully prepared compositions, and were delivered with considerable power. Nevertheless, neither they nor his letters have preserved his name to this generation. He is remembered chiefly, if not altogether, by his political career, and by the energetic manner in which he defended the cause of political liberty against the incursions of a narrow and tyrannical oligarchy. To estimate him rightly he must be judged by his own standard, and by the habits and feelings of his age. An estimate thus founded will probably be more liberal and kindly than that which it is, in the present day, the fashion to form. Beginning his political career with apparently selfish objects alone, he ended it with honour and self-abnegation. Aiming at first only at popularity and the consequent exaltation of himself and his family, he achieved, as it were, in spite of himself, a triumph of the noblest kind, and demonstrated the fact that in this England of ours, notwithstanding all her faults, it is only necessary that a politician should be honest, and should devote himself without reserve to the good of his country, to win a high place in popular affection.

For Wilkes's vices, there can, of course, be no excuse ; the offender must throw himself on the mercy of the court. It may, however, be pleaded in extenuation that Wilkes lived in an age of extreme corruption in both Church and State ; that he was no worse than his accusers, and that sensuality and vice as great as his, have been fully condoned in the case of many men who had far less excuse in their surroundings than he was fairly entitled to plead.

## THE FOUNDER OF METHODISM.

JOHN WESLEY, the Ignatius Loyola of the English Church, came of a distinctly ecclesiastical stock, and of an ancestry marked by all those qualities of ardent devotion and asceticism, with a trace of superstition, and a great deal of obstinacy, by which the founder of Methodism was more especially distinguished. His great-grandfather and his grandfather were both among the ejected of 1662. His father having been trained at the Grammar School at Dorchester, was taken up by some of the dissenters and sent to London to be educated at one of their academies. He did not stay long. Dissent in those days was still in its ferocious stage, and the brutalities of the Calf's Head Club were not to the taste of Samuel Wesley. He severed his connexion with nonconformity, trudged on foot to Oxford, entered himself as a "poor scholar" at Exeter College, maintained himself by writing exercises and impositions for undergraduates better supplied with this world's goods than himself, and by doing a little "coaching," took orders, and having attained the dignity of a London curacy, married. His wife was Susannah Annesley, daughter of another ejected minister, who had reasoned herself out of Calvinism into Socinianism only to be converted to Arminianism by her husband. Samuel Wesley was a sound church and king man, but when James II. entered upon his policy of conciliating the Roman

Catholics, he energetically refused to "worship the golden image." A few months later came the Revolution of 1688, in the defence of which Samuel Wesley was one of the first to write. He dedicated his book to Queen Mary, and was rewarded with the living of Epworth, in Lincolnshire. The ardour of his affection for the reigning family led to a very unseemly quarrel with his wife. Susannah could not turn Whig quite so easily as her husband, and refused to say "Amen" to the prayers for King William, whereupon Wesley questioned her, and having discovered her sentiments, refused cohabitation for the space of more than a year. The death of King William removed the original cause of dispute, and husband and wife having come together again, a son was born to them on the 17th June, 1703, whom they called by the names of John Benjamin. The latter was immediately discarded, and during the whole of his life he was known simply as John Wesley.

He was brought up at his mother's knee in the devout practice of a very ascetic form of religion. One evening a week was devoted to conversation upon matters of faith and practice, while the devotions of every day were regular and prolonged. When quite an infant, the rectory of Epworth was burnt down, and he had a very narrow escape from death. The fact was earnestly impressed upon his mind that he was "a brand plucked from the burning," and was used to point the moral of the religious teachings of his parents. At the proper age he went to the Charterhouse—that nursery of so many illustrious Englishmen—and it was whilst he was there that the rectory of Epworth was disturbed by those noises which afterwards became so celebrated. The ghost story has

never been explained, for the simple reason that it was never properly investigated. Every one about the house seems to have taken it for granted that the knockings and groanings were of necessity supernatural in their origin. The only sceptic in the family was Samuel Wesley, John's elder brother, who wrote from Westminster to suggest a watch being kept on the new man and maid servants, but whose advice does not seem to have been taken. John Wesley seems to have swallowed the whole story, for he gravely published it in the *Arminian Magazine* many years afterwards, and hints that the disturbance was a manifestation of the Divine wrath against his father for breaking his vow, never to cohabit with his wife until she acknowledged the Prince of Orange as king.<sup>1</sup> Superstition is, however, one of the few weak points in Wesley's character. Thus, for example, he was greatly addicted to the practice of sortilege when in a difficulty or in doubt. The act is always garnished with devout prayers and appeals for the Divine guidance and inspiration, but in practice it is exactly the same as the vulgar gambling tricks of "tossing up" or "drawing cuts." The error lies in looking for direct Divine interposition in ordinary matters. How the habit grew upon him, and the evil which it wrought, may be seen recorded in a score of places in his various biographies. Perhaps the most striking illustration is that related by Southey, with reference to Whitefield. Wesley

<sup>1</sup> Johnson's remark on a similar occasion is worthy of remembrance. Asked by Boswell what Wesley had made of his story of a ghost at Newcastle, Johnson answered, "Why, sir, he believes it, but not on sufficient authority. He did not take time enough to examine the girl. Charles Wesley, who is a more stationary man, does not believe the story. I am sorry that John did not take more pains to inquire into the evidence."

returned to England from Georgia as Whitefield was going thither. The ships passed within sight of each other, and when Wesley landed he found that he could still communicate with his friend, to whom he accordingly wrote. "When I saw God by the wind which was carrying you out brought me in, I asked counsel of God. His answer you have enclosed." The inclosure was a slip of paper, on which was written, 'Let him return to London.' Whitefield very wisely used his own judgment. The story of the prophet in the Book of Kings recurred to him; how he had turned back from his appointed course because another prophet had told him that it was the Lord's will that he should do so, for believing whom a lion met him in the way. Whitefield therefore continued his voyage. To one who is not a Wesleyan there seems to be something strangely irreverent in the acts of these eminently holy men. Placed as they were with certain very definite duties before them, one would naturally think that their only course was to do that which lay nearest to them, leaving the results to Him who had appointed them to the work. Instead of doing so they hesitate, procrastinate, and seek for more definite guidance than has been vouchsafed to them, and finally proceed to dictate to their Maker by what means He shall answer them. Stripped of its pious phraseology, it must be owned that the act is neither more nor less than a piece of profane superstition. It followed, however, very naturally upon the notion which possesses Puritans of all types—Arminians and Calvinists alike—that God is perpetually interfering in the minutest details of the government of the world. The notion of a divine order and of a reign of law unbroken and unvarying, appears to be too sublime for enthusiasts.

of this type to apprehend. With them the Divine Being is petty, petulant, and tyrannical, much given to meddlesome interference, and only to be propitiated by a system of self-sacrifice and austerity no whit better than the practices of the heathen.

It is somewhat singular that of all men Wesley should have fallen into this superstition. Ignorant and unintelligent men, whose religious instructors are no wiser than themselves, may easily pick up erroneous notions and views of the divine government of the world, which will not bear the test of reason, but from Wesley, who was a man of education, in the highest sense of the word, better things might be expected. He was, as has been mentioned, at the Charterhouse until he was seventeen years of age. Thence he went to Christ Church, Oxford, where he became a diligent student, especially of logic. Under the influence of his father, he devoted himself to theology, his favourite reading being the ascetic treatise *de Imitatione*, and Jeremy Taylor's "Holy Living and Dying." In religious matters he was unusually strict, and as a matter of course he had no difficulty when he went up for ordination. Six months after his ordination he became Fellow of Lincoln, then as now one of the best of the colleges of Oxford, and after a farther period of eight months he was appointed lecturer in Greek, and moderator of the classes. In those days disputationes were held on every weekday, and whether the students profited by them or not, it is certain that they were eminently useful to the moderator who presided over them. The time not occupied in these public duties was given by Wesley to private study. This was mapped out in the most careful and methodical fashion conceivable. On Monday and Tuesday he

read the classics; Wednesdays were devoted to logic and ethical philosophy; Thursdays to Hebrew and Arabic, in both of which he was no mean proficient; Fridays to mathematics and natural philosophy; Saturdays to oratory, poetry, and literary composition, and on Sundays, as became the day, he studied divinity.

Wesley was thus no uneducated enthusiast, no inspired cobbler rich in spiritual phraseology, and destitute of aspirates, but a scholar and a student practised in all the arts of culture and refinement, a fact which makes his enthusiasm the more remarkable. This religious enthusiasm grew upon him slowly but very steadily, and it was fostered by a period of seclusion in the remote Lincolnshire village of Wroote, near Epworth, of which his father was rector, and in which he acted as curate. After two years spent here he returned to the Lincoln, to find his younger brother Charles, one of a society of young men who had associated themselves for religious purposes, who lived by rule, who took the sacrament weekly, and who were called in derision the "Holy Club." A fellow of Merton remembering a religious party of the days of the Commonwealth who were called "Methodists," applied the name to the new sect, and as sometimes happens with nicknames, it stuck. No sooner had Wesley returned than he was called to the presidency of the society, and at once adopted, not merely the habit of living by rule, but also the austeries which distinguished its members. In the onset the "Holy Club" was like a good many other collegiate societies, a mere association of young men desirous of reading together, but with the addition of a somewhat strong religious element which induced them to meet on Sundays for

the study of divinity. Gradually, however, religion became the only business of their meetings. They visited prisoners and the sick; they fasted rigorously every Wednesday and Friday; they took the sacrament on every Sunday, and they were diligent in self-examination and in private prayer. This self-examination appears to have been carried to a remarkable excess. In the appendix to the life of Wesley, Southey gives a "scheme of self-examination" which occupies a couple of closely printed pages, and which shows that the members of the Holy Club, in theory at all events, gave every moment of their time to the affairs of their souls. This perpetual "contemplation of one's own navel" as Carlyle calls it, cannot have been healthy, either from a moral or from an intellectual point of view, and so probably Wesley and his friends would have been told had they consulted the bishop, to whom in theory they owed an unbounded deference. As it happened, however, the only subject on which they conferred with him was the visitation of the prisoners, which he willingly authorized. For the rest they took counsel of no man, save only that Wesley wrote to his father in terms which led to an expression of gratitude from the old man that "God had given him two sons together at Oxford, to whom he had given grace and courage to turn the war against the world and the devil."

Just as Wesley was developing into enthusiasm and extravagance, he fell in with William Law—the once well-known author of the "Serious Call to the Unconverted." Law was of all men the most dangerous to a man of Wesley's temper. He was essentially a mystic, and he accepted without questioning all the absurd and whimsical reveries of Jacob Behmen—

dreams whose fantastical folly the unsparing spirit of modern criticism has effectually dissipated. Law, however, acquired an immense influence over the young Fellow of Lincoln, and so far unsettled his mind, that he began to doubt not merely the usefulness, but the lawfulness of ordinary study. Under his teaching also the Holy Club became a hot-bed of fanaticism, so that the Heads of Houses felt compelled to hold a meeting formally to consider what was to be done with reference to it. A report got about in Oxford that "the Dean and Censors were going to blow up the Holy Club." Wesley denounced the action of the Dons with characteristic fervour, and in reply to his elder brother, Samuel, who admonished him by letter, he expressed his determination to persevere in a course which had been denounced as "whimsical." Samuel Wesley, dissatisfied with his brother's explanation and defence, went to Oxford and certainly found enough to cause uneasiness. Not only was Wesley distinguished by affectation of manner, and by singularity of costume, but he was living with such austerity and so utter a disregard of the laws of health, that it appeared as though he was eager for death. One of his intimate friends, and a conspicuous member of the "Holy Club," Morgan, was on his death-bed, exhausted by excessive fasting and religious austerities, and with a mind so wretchedly enfeebled, that his religion had become a torture and a poison. Wesley was rapidly approaching the same state. After constantly spitting blood for some time, he was awakened one night by the bursting of a blood-vessel. Happily the imminence of his danger rendered it necessary to call in a physician, who appears to have succeeded in convincing him that suicide even by fasting

and austerity was not the surest way into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Even this sharp lesson was insufficient to convince Wesley of the error of his monastic predilections. Had he been a Roman Catholic, he would at this time have entered one or other of the severest orders of that Church, but being as he was a minister of the English Church he found in Oxford such a substitute for a monastery as Protestantism could afford. His father and his elder brother were anxious that he should secure the next presentation to the living of Epworth, partly in order that the comfort of his mother and sisters might be assured, and partly because they were undoubtedly convinced that even from Wesley's own point of view he might serve God as a parish priest as well as in the position of fellow of a college and head of a small society. Wesley was, however, unconvinced, and adhered steadfastly to his determination to refuse this living. The motives for the decision may have been all that was admirable; its consequences were painful in the extreme. The father died a few months after, leaving little or no provision for his wife and daughters, so that on the very day of his funeral the live-stock on his small farm were seized by an inexorable creditor for a debt of a few pounds. The shipwreck of the family was complete. The mother and sisters were dependent on the eldest son, Samuel, who accepted the trust manfully, and took them to live at Tiverton, where he was now headmaster of the grammar school. The fine character of Samuel Wesley had been overshadowed by the greater celebrity of his illustrious brother, but no one can read his letters without seeing that in his own way he was every whit as estimable a man.

Following almost immediately upon his father's death came Wesley's expedition to Georgia. The business appears to have been undertaken with very mixed motives, though Wesley strongly protested that the end of those who went on this expedition "was not to avoid want nor to gain the dung and dross of riches and honour, but singly this, to save our souls; to live wholly to the glory of God." With these ends in view their life was one of bitter and sustained asceticism. On board the ship which conveyed John Wesley and his brother Charles to Georgia was a party of Moravians full of zeal and energy, and full also of that weird mysticism of which Law and Behmen were the typical exponents. With these amiable enthusiasts Wesley allied himself very closely, the result being that during the whole voyage, which lasted from the 14th of October, 1735 to the 5th of February, 1736, they lived with the severity of a set of Carthusian monks. They rose at four in the morning, and from that hour until they retired to rest, between nine and ten, their time was wholly spent in preaching, praying, singing hymns, and exhorting each other. When he had fairly landed in Savannah he began to work in the same ascetic spirit, and to act as though he believed that people living in the world could ever be induced to live as though their salvation were the only concern of life. He had had a bitter experience in England when during a very short absence from Oxford the Holy Club had gone to pieces, but the lesson thus taught to him was apparently thrown away, and he dealt with his Georgian colonists much in the spirit of a monastic superior managing a body of "religious." What followed might have been anticipated by any one with a moderate knowledge of human nature. Both the

brothers quarrelled with Oglethorpe, who really seems to have behaved with great patience, generosity, and forbearance. They were reconciled and Charles removed to a distance. Wesley then stirred up strife and disorder in the colony by excessive niceness on points of ritual, and by innovations to which the unhappy colonists were by no means favourable. He revived the obsolete rubrics of the Church and gave great offence by refusing to baptize infants except by immersion. Then came an eminently discreditable entanglement with a young woman, from which Wesley ran away when the matter had passed into the hands of the ministers of the law. It is true that he calls his course of action “shaking off the dust of his feet” against his persecutors, but worldly-minded people will be apt to speak of it in a less flattering way.

The quarrel was not a pleasant business. Oglethorpe, who was a shrewd and kind-hearted man of the world, thought—very likely with perfect accuracy—that if Wesley were married his excessive and inconvenient zeal would be tempered. Accordingly he threw him as much as he could into association with two young women, one of whom Wesley unquestionably wished to marry. She, however, rejected him and married instead a Mr. Williamson, shortly after which Wesley saw fit to repel her when she presented herself at the Communion. The ground assigned was that she had done some wrong to her neighbour, which, however, Wesley afterwards altered by affirming that the real reason was her having failed to comply with the Rubric, which directs that “so many as intend to be partakers of the Holy Communion shall signify their names to the curate at least some time the day before.” Mr. Williamson’s uncle, a Mr. Causton, on her behalf

demanded that as Wesley had put a public affront upon his niece he should at least publicly state his reasons. Wesley refused to do so, alleging that if he did "many ill-consequences" would be produced. "What you will not do, then," said the uncle, "I will do myself. The wrong is that she has rejected your proposals of marriage, and has married Mr. Williamson." Mr. Williamson thereupon prosecuted Wesley for defamation of his wife's character, and she in her turn made affidavit that Wesley had many times proposed marriage to her and had been as frequently rejected. The grand jury, which was composed of almost the whole adult male population of the colony, found a true bill on an indictment of ten counts, but the case was not brought to trial for some little time. As a matter of fact Oglethorpe was by no means anxious that the business should go any farther, and if Wesley had stayed on in the colony he would probably have heard no more of it. As soon as the grand jury had given in their verdict, however, he made up his mind to run away. He posted a paper in the public square announcing his intention, and was warned that he must find bail for his appearance, but no steps were taken to enforce the demand, and in the night "the tide then serving, he shook off the dust of his feet, and left Georgia." Years afterwards in his controversy with Warburton the latter contemptuously quoted these words, "'He shook off the dust of his feet! ' much easier done than shaking off the infamy." The words are strong but few will be disposed to think them too strong, especially in view of an abominable charge made by Wesley's biographers, Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore, many years afterwards, when, as they tell their readers, the last of the actors in this wretched

business had been dead for some time. According to these gentlemen a young lady who had married after her arrival in Georgia, was troubled in conscience, and told Wesley under a promise of secrecy—which he must have violated if the story is to have any authority whatever,—the plot which General Oglethorpe had laid to cure him of his enthusiasm, adding these words:—“Sir, I had no rest till I resolved to tell you the whole affair. I have myself been urged to that behaviour towards you, which I am now ashamed to mention. Both Miss Sophia (Causton, afterwards Mrs. Williamson) and myself were ordered, if we could but succeed, even to *deny you nothing.*” These biographers say further, “When General Oglethorpe perceived by Wesley’s altered manner and some incautious expressions that his scheme had been discovered, he gave him a hint that there were Indians who would shoot any man in the colony for a bottle of rum, and actually sent an Indian to intimidate if not to murder him.” It is difficult to say how tales of this kind ought to be characterized. That they are true at all events in the form in which they reach this generation—probably, few readers will be anxious to contend. Such as they are, however, they illustrate very strikingly the unamiable side of Wesley’s character which induces him invariably to believe and to represent those who differ from him in any particular as children of the devil and the special objects of Divine wrath.

Whatever mistakes of conduct Wesley may have been guilty of in Georgia, they were not such as to interfere with his ecclesiastical character, and he had no sooner returned to London than he again began to preach. There is something not altogether pleasant in his account of his state of mind at this time. He

considers himself to have wanted that saving faith which his Moravian friends taught him to consider essential, yet he preached that faith in such a manner as insured his exclusion from more than one London pulpit. Coleridge has an acute remark upon this circumstance. Four days after his arrival in London, Wesley was introduced to Peter Boehler, one of the Moravians who were then going out to join their co-religionists in Georgia. With him he paid a visit to Oxford, and by him, says Wesley, "in the hands of the great God I was clearly convinced of unbelief—of the want of that faith whereby alone we are to be saved." His natural scruple as to the propriety of preaching the necessity of faith without possessing it himself were combated by Boehler, who advised him by no means to leave off preaching. "But what shall I preach?" said Wesley. The Moravian replied, "Preach faith until you have it, and then because you have it you *will* preach faith." In his note on this point Coleridge remarks, "Is not this too like 'tell a lie long enough and often enough, and you will be sure to end in believing it.'?" The faith came to Wesley after a time, but he did not obtain it until after his brother Charles, who had accepted the new doctrine at the same time, had been as he describes it "converted." In the meanwhile the Methodist society in London was organized, rules were laid down for its guidance "in obedience to the command of God by St. James, and by the advice of Peter Boehler."

This development of Wesley's views was not attained without a certain amount of scandal. A few days after his conversion he announced to his astonished host and his family that he "had never been a Christian until within the last five days." Hutton not unnaturally warned him from the Anglican churchman's

point of view, against despising the benefits of the two sacraments. Mrs. Hutton, with feminine intuition and true womanly frankness, said, "If you were not a Christian ever since I knew you, you were a great hypocrite, for you made us all believe you were one." Wesley replied, "That when we had renounced everything but faith and then got into Christ, then, and not till then had we any reason to believe we were Christians," following up this new dogma with the extraordinary remark that the Sermon on the Mount "was the letter that killeth," which, when reported to his admirable elder brother Samuel, was declared by him to be "no less than blasphemy against the Son of Man. It is mere Quakerism," he added, "making the outward Christ an enemy to the Christ within." This was not all. Charles Wesley was, at this time, living with an illiterate and fanatical brazier in Little Britain, whom he had taken as his soul's physician, and he and John alike preached in such a way as to lead those about them, who were by no means irreligious people, to doubt their sanity. Nor can any wonder be felt at such a circumstance. A preacher who exhorts his hearers to disregard all teaching but such as comes in dreams to some and in visions to others, and who guides his own conduct by that species of holy fortune-telling known as the *sortes Biblicæ*, has no right to complain if his friends consider him something of a lunatic. Nor does anything in Wesley's conduct, immediately after these events, point to any other conclusion. His mind seems to have become thoroughly unhinged, and by way of remedy he applied himself to those to whom he was indebted for his disease, and made a pilgrimage to Herrnhutt. Here he stayed for a fortnight, obtaining a confirmation of the theories he

had embraced, and observing with admiration that remarkable community which, when all is done, cannot be held to rank much higher than the more harmless of those fantastic communities described by Mr. Hepworth Dixon in "New America." One good result arose from this visit. Much as Wesley saw to admire in the Moravians, his eyes were gradually opened to the weak points of their system, though the weakest of all—Zinzendorf's wild heresies and the ghastly obscenities of their metaphorical talk—were as yet unknown to him. He wrote a letter of remonstrance to Zinzendorf, and seems for the time to have contemplated withdrawing from all communication with the community. Rebuked by his friend Delamotte and strengthened by the result of an application to his favourite oracle, he remained in communion with the Moravians for some time longer.

The fundamental differences were, however, too great for the artificial union to last for ever. Other influences than merely spiritual ones interfered. Zinzendorf fancied the community which Wesley had formed at the meeting-house in Fetter Lane was a branch of his Herrnhutt establishment, and was disposed to treat it as such. Wesley, on the other hand, was one of those who will brook no superior, as he had plainly shown in an interview with the admirable Bishop Gibson, who sought to curb some of his extravagances. Between two such men differences would certainly arise, and the occasion was not long delayed. One Molther was on his way to Pennsylvania, but was detained by sundry accidents in London. Wesley being absent he took charge of the Fetter Lane congregation, and began by rebuking those ravings and contortions, those ejaculations and paroxysms to which Wesley had been accustomed to point as evident proofs of grace.

These Molther explained to be mere delusions, and the effects of animal spirits and a vivid imagination. Such a contradiction of his favourite theories was bad enough in Wesley's eyes, but the German missionary went farther, and preached solifidianism in its most exaggerated form. He maintained that there are no degrees of faith ; that no man has any faith whatever before he has the full assurance ; that the way to attain such assurance was to wait for Christ and be still, and that the use of what are commonly called the "means of grace"—frequenting church, communicating, fasting, private prayer, and the reading of the Scriptures, are injurious rather than beneficial. News of this extraordinary teaching was sent to Wesley, who hurried back to London to find his congregation rent in sunder, and the good which he had been labouring to effect wholly undone. A truce was patched up between the two sections of the society, but it was obvious that a separation must come before long. Wesley had gone away again but was hastily summoned back to heal the disorder, found Molther ill on his arrival, and had the hardihood to affirm that his sickness was a judgment of God for venturing to oppose him. Again, he resorted to his pious conjuring, and opening his Bible at random his eye fell upon the words, "What is that to thee ? Follow thou me !" which he took as an indication that it was the Divine will that he should break with the Moravians. Arrived in London, therefore, he went to the meeting in Fetter Lane armed with a favourite spiritual weapon of the German sectaries, one of the spurious treatises ascribed to Dionysius the Areopagite. From this he read a passage embodying the favourite doctrine that for any one not "born of God" to pray, communicate or read the

Scriptures was a mortal sin, and then asked his audience whether this was right or wrong. This answer was that it was right. He asked if he might again preach in Fetter Lane: the reply was, "No, this place is taken for the Germans." On the following Sunday night he appeared at the Love Feast, and having read a long and solemn protest, he withdrew himself, taking a small body of his hearers with him. More would have followed, but some Moravian, who guessed what had been intended, hid Wesley's hat, and while he was looking for it arrested many who might have been carried away in his wake. The breach speedily widened. One of the Germans wrote to Wesley informing him that St. Paul justly described him as having "eyes full of adultery and cannot cease from sin," and taking upon him "to guide unstable souls, and lead them in the way of damnation." He replied in a letter from "John Wesley, a presbyter of the Church of God in England to the Church of God at Herrnhutt in Upper Lusatia," in which he encountered this piece of vulgar fanaticism with courteous argument. Unfortunately his arguments were not of a kind to commend themselves to reasonable men. The people of Herrnhutt had expressed an opinion that they "might conform to the world so far as to talk on trifling subjects, and to join in worldly diversions in order to do good." Wesley objected to such conformity. In their reply they said, "we believe it much better to discourse out of the newspapers than to chatter about holy things to no purpose." Wesley answered, "Perhaps so, but what is this to the point? I believe both one and the other to be useless, and therefore an abomination to the Lord." And if Warburton is to be believed, "he pushed the matter so far

as to come to a solemn resolution never to laugh, and to guard against the approaches of this paltry infirmity, never to speak even a little of worldly things." A man who pushed his enthusiasm to such a point of trappistine severity as this could not long associate on terms of equality with rival teachers, nor did Wesley. Attempts at mediation having failed, Zinzendorf himself came over from Herrnhut and had a long conversation with Wesley in Gray's Inn Gardens. All was, however, without effect. Wesley promised to consider what Zinzendorf had advanced, but reconciliation was obviously impossible. Even had the religious questions been capable of adjustment their personal differences were wholly incompatible. What Coleridge describes as "Wesley's insulated and monocratic spirit"—in less flattering phrase his domineering temper—was the immediate cause of the breach, but the reason undoubtedly lies in the deeper difference of national idiosyncrasy.

Apart from this occasion for separating himself from the Moravians, another may be found in the unwillingness of Wesley to submit himself to any guidance or authority whatever. The Ritualists of the present day are very anxious to claim Wesley as one of themselves—one writer has, indeed, published an elaborate work with the object of showing that John Wesley was neither more nor less than a modern High Churchman—and certainly so far as disregard of the injunctions of ecclesiastical superiors is concerned the claim may safely be allowed. Even this rebelliousness of temper, however, can hardly be held to extenuate the manner in which Wesley attacked the Moravians after having broken off his direct relations with them. In all his life there is nothing more really painful than his violent assaults upon

these generally estimable men. He had lived amongst them and had been in constant association with them, both at Herrnhutt and in London, but he found no fault with them. Other people were scandalized by their wild, erotic and indecent talk : Wesley never blamed it. It may be that his knowledge of German was too imperfect to enable him to comprehend the unutterable loathsomeness of some of their reveries, but that he was wholly ignorant of their habitual manner of dilating on certain subjects it is impossible to believe. So soon, however, as he broke with them he found them all that was objectionable. "The Church of God at Herrnhutt in Upper Lusatia," was no longer a church but a "palpable cheat." Of Zinzendorf he could say, "Was there ever such a Proteus under the sun as this Lord Fraydeck, Domine de Thurstaine, &c., &c., for he has almost as many names as he has shapes or faces?" The Moravians themselves he accused of cunning, of evasion, and of disguise, and their tenets of setting fathers against their children and children against their parents.

Viler charges soon followed. Persons who had forsaken their society made foul and filthy accusations against them, and those Wesley adopted and published to the world with the sanction of his name. One Rimius accused them of something equivalent to polyandry. Wesley writes in his journal, "Mr. Rimius has said nothing to what might have been said concerning their marriage economy. I know a hundred times more than he has written, but the particulars are too shocking to relate. I believe no such things were ever practised before; no not among the most barbarous heathens." Wesley is thus condemned out of his own mouth. If he knew of these abominations at

all he must have known of them at the very time when he was engaged in writing his unctuous letters to the "Church of God at Herrnhutt," and was believed by Zinzendorf to be the English head of a branch of his own society.<sup>3</sup>

It was, however, obviously necessary that the English Methodists should separate from their German co-religionists. The society had grown enormously, and its ramifications were extending throughout the entire kingdom. Working in the main side by side with Wesley, Whitefield had brought the powers of his wonderful natural eloquence to bear upon the masses of the people, and on all sides the effect of a great religious movement was making itself felt. The movement was not, indeed, without its objectionable side. Sober-minded people complained that religion was too often divorced from morality, and that the doctrines which the Wesleys taught tended towards Antinomianism in its very worst form. The doctrines of the "new birth" of "effectual calling," and of "final perseverance," may indeed be true enough, or rather may have their truthful side, but they are most

<sup>3</sup> "The first distinction of wisdom from above is purity, that is, that it is free from carnal and spiritual pollution. But Methodism, whatever be said of its paternity, which appears to have been from Law's 'Christian Perfection' and 'Serious Call,' books which mightily impressed the soul of Mr. Wesley, cannot boast a very pure education, for its cradle was rocked by Count Zinzendorf, the founder of the Moravians, who, to say nothing of their hymn book, a mass of absurd and filthy nonsense, adopted such profane and impure practices in the consummation of marriage (or, as their ritual calls it, 'The Marriage Economy') as entitle them to be ranked not in the number of Christian sects, but with the Turlupins of the thirteenth century, the 'Brothers and Sisters of the Free Spirit,' whose creed was Pantheism, and whose practice was exempt from all restraints of morality and religion." Warburton, p. 526.

certainly capable of an utterly false and most dangerous interpretation which, unquestionably, they not unfrequently received. The preachers too were accused, not always it is to be feared without reason, of exciting the hysterical passions of their female hearers for evil purposes. Against Wesley himself no breath of scandal was ever uttered, yet he sanctioned and even encouraged religious rhapsodies, which read like the ravings of St. Teresa. More than this, Wesley stimulated the insanities of his more excitable hearers to a very dangerous extent. Constantly as we turn over his journal, we come upon tales of persons falling into fits, raving, shrieking, trembling, groaning, and suddenly being "raised up full of peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." Wesley seems to have accepted these displays as miraculous testimonies to the truth of his mission. Thus it is related at a comparatively early period of his career that being at Bristol after Whitefield had prepared the way for him by means of his marvellous eloquence, he one day expounded the fourth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. The persons present "called upon God to confirm his word. Immediately," adds Wesley, "one that stood by to our no small surprise, cried out aloud, with the utmost vehemence, even as in the agonies of death, but we continued in prayer till a new song was put into her mouth, even a thanksgiving unto our God. Soon after two other persons (well-known in this place as labouring to live in all good conscience towards all men), were seized with strong pain and constrained to roar for the quietness of their heart. But it was not long before they likewise burst forth into praise to God their Saviour." This occurs not once or twice but on almost every occasion of Wesley's preaching, and before

long these ravings became a perfect disease. Hysterical emotion was declared to be the distinct work of God, and Wesley, instead of advising his hearers to privacy and self-restraint, encouraged all these exhibitions to the utmost of his power. His preachings rapidly became a scandal. Scarcely had he begun to speak on some occasions when the manifestations began; groaning, weeping, loud outcries, and hysterical sobs, often drowned his voice, and many of the patients exhibited all the symptoms of demoniacal possession, which Wesley afterwards referred to as miraculous evidences of the truth of his mission when controversy on the subject was forced upon him. When Warburton assailed him he appealed to his miracles : "I have seen with my eyes," said he, "and heard with my ears several things which to the best of my judgment cannot be accounted for by the ordinary course of natural causes, and which I therefore believe ought to be ascribed to the extraordinary interposition of God. If any man choose to call these miracles, I reclaim not." And he instanced the case of one John Haydon and the manner in which he by an effort of faith threw off a violent fever which oppressed him. More offensive in their way are, however, the repeated insinuations that all who opposed Wesley's preachings, were the special objects of Divine wrath, and consequently punished with "grievous sickness and divers kinds of plagues." Hints of this kind are found scattered profusely through his journals, but the manifestations to which reference is principally made, were those which took place at the times of Wesley's preaching.

The scenes on some of these occasions appear to have been equally shocking and scandalous, and they naturally gave abundant ground for attack by Wesley's

opponents. Warburton in his examination of Wesley's "Doctrine of Grace," makes a very powerful onslaught on these exhibitions. After denouncing with considerable energy the merciless character of Methodism as evidenced by the complacency with which Wesley records every misfortune of his opponents as a Divine judgment—an error into which Wesley constantly fell—he pauses for a moment to inquire what were the fruits of Wesley's proceedings. He quotes the famous saying of St. James:—"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." These words Warburton contrasts with the saying of Wesley:—"True religion does not consist in any or all of these three things, the living harmless, using the means of grace, and doing much good." What Wesley meant by true religion was "God's dwelling and reigning in the soul," and in order to obtain the assurance of this indwelling, the patient has to pass through a course of severe mental torture. "As these, his spiritual cures (which he reports with the exactness of a Hippocrates or a Sydenham), are all the good fruits he pretends to, he will not be displeased to have a few of the choicest of them set in a fair light." What follows will not bear condensation. "The condition of his audience on his first operation upon them, is thus graphically described: 'I preached in an open place two or three miles from Newcastle; the wind was high and extremely sharp; but I saw none go away until I went. Yet I observed none seemed to be much convinced; only stunned as if cut in the head.' This was in order. They were first to be stunned; the watchman reason was to be laid asleep before he could set fire to their imaginations.

But he brings them to their senses with a vengeance : the vengeance of the devil. ‘ I felt the fire of hell already kindled in my breast,’ says one, ‘ and all my body was in as much pain as if I had been in a burning fiery furnace.’ ‘ I was interrupted,’ says Mr. Wesley, ‘ by the cries of one who was pricked at the heart,’ one of those, I suppose, who had before been ‘ cut in the head,’ and having now got possession both of the head and the heart, the game begins : ‘ Another person dropped down. A little boy near him was seized in the same manner. A young man who stood behind fixed his eyes on him and sank down himself as one dead, but soon began to roar out and beat himself on the ground, so that six men could scarcely hold him. Meanwhile many others began to cry out to the Saviour of all that he would come and help them, insomuch that all the house and, indeed, all the street for some space was in an uproar. . . Forty or fifty of those who were seeking salvation, desired leave to spend the night together in the society room. Before ten I left them and laid down.’ For our engineer had so amply provided them with combustibles and so fitly laid his train, that he knew they would take fire from their own collisions. He was not disappointed. Between two and three in the morning he was awaked and desired to come down stairs. ‘ I immediately,’ says he, ‘ heard such a confused noise as if a number of men were all putting to the sword. It increased when I came into the room and began to pray,’ &c. Others went distracted and were tied down, raving on their beds. And with this spiritual madness, he is so enamoured that he calls it when at its height, ‘ *a glorious time.* ’ ”

This phase of enthusiasm lasted for no inconsiderable

time, and brought Wesley into communication with certain Huguenot refugees—"French prophets," as they were popularly called—who had reduced bodily contortion in the name of religion to a lucrative profession. Wesley had at first been doubtful about them and expressed an opinion that their emotion might be "hysterical or artificial." They succeeded, however, in making many converts amongst the Methodists at Bristol, and when Wesley returned after a short absence he found that other people were producing the same miracles with himself. He preached from the words "Woe unto the prophets, saith the Lord, who prophesy in my name, and I have not sent them," and whilst he was speaking eight of his hearers dropped down convulsed—"the pains of hell came about them." It is edifying to note that neither Wesley nor his hearers questioned the Divine character of these exhibitions for a moment. When the "French prophets" went into seeming trances and produced convulsions in their hearers, their work was an imposture or the effect of natural causes; but when Wesley's congregation raved and shrieked and groaned, it was because they "terribly felt the wrath of God abiding upon them," so that they were "constrained to roar aloud while the sword of the Spirit was dividing asunder their souls and spirits, and joints and marrow."

One person indeed, protested against these extravagances—Wesley's elder brother Samuel—in an admirable and affectionate letter of remonstrance. These remonstrances were repeated with some energy when their mother, then an aged woman, approved the whole of John Wesley's proceedings, and expressed herself convinced of the truth of the dangerous doctrine of "assurance." It is perhaps hardly necessary

to say that the expostulation was unheeded. Samuel Wesley died three weeks later, after an illness of three hours, in "the sure and certain hope of a sincere and humble Christian who trusted in the merits of his Saviour and the mercy of his God," and he has since had the honour of being abused by the fanatical part of his brother's followers as "a worldly priest who hated all pretence to more religion than our neighbours, as an infallible mark of a dissenter."

This last letter is worthy of attention as illustrating the schismatical form which the Methodist societies were assuming. "They design separation," said Samuel Wesley, and he went on to show how with the best intentions they were cleaving the Church of England in sunder. They were forbidden every pulpit in the diocese of London, and forbidden, it must be added, entirely through their own extravagances. Bishop Gibson, whom it is the unworthy fashion of the present day to assail as a worldly-minded and cold-hearted prelate, filled with all the pride of office and revelling in luxury, was, much against his will, taunted into inhibiting them; so that to preach in his diocese was, as Samuel Wesley put the matter, "actual schism." In like manner the Bishop of Gloucester (Warburton), had inhibited Whitefield, and it seemed probable that before long every bishop in England would follow the example. Yet Whitefield and the Wesleys continued to preach in their meeting-rooms and in the fields, using no portions of the liturgy, but extemporizing their prayers as well as their sermons. Wesley boasted that he differed in no point from the Church of England, while on several points he proclaimed his utter dissent from the doctrines of the professed dissenters. Yet it must have been as obvious

to observers of the eighteenth century, as it is to those of the nineteenth, that the society which bears his name could not long remain within the pale of the Church.

The various steps of the process seem natural enough. The Wesleys began by preaching an enthusiastic and dangerous doctrine for which it is difficult to find a warrant in Scripture, and impossible to discover one in the formularies of the Church of England. Before long the ardent preaching of this doctrine threw the hearers into convulsions and produced deplorable scenes. The clergy not unnaturally refused the use of their pulpits under such circumstances, and the bishops seconding the obvious desire of their clergy inhibited them. They were thus driven into the fields, and as field-preaching is not always possible in the English climate, they took to preaching in the meeting-houses, which had served for their prayer-meetings and love-feasts. Then lay-preachers were found to be necessary, from the unwillingness of the clergy to co-operate with them, and from the ardent zeal of several members of the societies. And thus the organization grew up, always in subordination to John Wesley as the head. The most important factor in it was, however, the "class," which arose out of the necessity for raising funds to relieve Wesley from the burden of debt which he had assumed on account of the meeting-house at Bristol. One of the body proposed that each of the more wealthy and influential members of the society should take charge of eleven of the poorer, call upon them weekly and obtain a contribution of a penny from such as could pay it, and make up what was wanting. Wesley adopted the suggestion readily, and it was soon found that the "class" afforded an organization for a perfect

system of inspection. The class-leader saw every person under his care once a week, and offered him advice, reproof, consolation, encouragement or exhortation as his spiritual necessities appeared to demand. Once a week also they met the minister and stewards of the society to whom they delivered the contributions which they had collected, and to whom they made their reports of the religious and bodily condition of the persons under their care. At first the visits were made from house to house, but it was found that so much time was consumed in that way that weekly meetings were held. At these meetings something of the nature of confession was practised, and as Samuel Wesley very reasonably pointed out in the letter to his mother to which reference has been made, no little opposition was excited by the knowledge that according to the rules of the society every member of a class was engaged to relate everything without reserve that concerned his or her conscience, totally irrespective of the effect which might be produced on other people. Parents and employers naturally objected to a system which practically made their private affairs the property, if not of the world at large, at least of so much of it as was implied in a class of a dozen persons with their relations and friends, and it is to this circumstance in all probability that the early Wesleyans were indebted for much of the hostility of which they complain.<sup>3</sup> Such a society is obviously alien to the spirit of the Church of England. Guilds and benevolent associations have indeed been formed at various times by her members, but they

<sup>3</sup> It is worthy of remark that Charles Wesley at first admired the class system, but before his death was wont to say that he "abominated" the band meetings.

have almost invariably been under the direction of the parochial clergy, if they were to be worked with any success. Wesley's system ignored the clergy altogether and made him sole and responsible head of the society. The very meeting-houses were his property—in trust, it is true, and for the best of ends—but his to all intents and purposes; while from the first he constituted himself sole arbiter in matters of faith and morals. Over all these scattered congregations he exercised a continuous oversight, travelling constantly from place to place, and preaching continuously. The clergy naturally refused their assistance. They objected strongly to his theology, and still more to the physical manifestations by which its preaching was accompanied, while they looked with a not unreasonable jealousy upon the growth of societies which, though they professed to be within the Church, were obviously schismatical. The institution of lay-preachers authorized and licensed by Wesley alone, was a still greater stride in the direction of separation. Wesley indeed protested his attachment to the doctrines and discipline of the Church to the last, but his followers are not to be blamed if they took the final step which severed them completely from her.

It is customary to dwell with much energy upon the iniquitous character of the opposition which Wesley encountered at the hands of the bishops and clergy, as well as of the civil authorities; and recent writers, not themselves remarkable for wisdom, discretion and tolerance, have condemned with infinite vigour the short-sightedness of the English hierarchy, in not availing itself of Wesley's unrivalled eloquence to strengthen their hold upon the nation. In the Roman Church, we are told, such a man would have been en-

couraged in every possible way, and would have become a new St. Dominic, St. Francis or St. Ignatius. It is, perhaps, permissible to doubt the accuracy of this view, though it is supported with all the weight of that eminent ecclesiastical authority the *Daily Telegraph*. In the first place, had Wesley been a priest of the Roman Church, his training would have been very different, and he would have found himself compelled to obey before he commanded ; while in the second, the new doctrines which he taught would have been very promptly suppressed, and he would have found himself more effectually muzzled than was ever actually the case. As things were, he was allowed immense latitude, and he repaid it by tolerably rancorous abuse of all who differed from him, and by creating the one great schism which has torn the Church of his baptism in twain, since the Reformation. It will probably be said that he was himself abused and so much may unquestionably be granted. At the same time it must be admitted that he tried the faith of his followers somewhat severely and not unfrequently gave occasion to the enemy to blaspheme. He appears to have believed himself possessed of absolutely miraculous powers. "By thinking strongly on a text of Scripture which promised that these signs should follow those that believe," says Southey, "and by calling on Christ to increase his faith and confirm the word of his grace, he shook off instantaneously, he says, a fever which had hung upon him for some days, and was in a moment freed from all pain, and restored to his former strength." Again :—He visited one of his flock at night. The man was senseless, speechless, and pulseless, but Wesley and a few of his followers "joined in prayer" over him, and before they had finished the

senses and the speech of the man returned. Other signs and wonders followed, and Wesley's disordered judgment accepted them as proofs of special Divine favour. So much weight does he seem to have attached to this matter that he seems to have believed himself authorized to act as though above all law. Mistaken though his judgment may have been, it is difficult to imagine any extenuation for the violence with which he was sometimes treated. The only excuse which can be offered for the conduct of the mob and of its aiders and abettors is, that the times were rough and violent, and that it is by no means easy to keep a crowd within bounds when it is excited by religious extravagances. Those whose memories carry them back to the disturbances at St. George's-in-the-East a quarter of a century ago, will hardly be surprised that a mob a hundred years earlier should have pelted preachers whose ministrations very generally had the effect of sending women into fits.

There is something more to be said. The Church of England was unable to avail herself of his unquestionable powers, because in many respects his doctrine was wholly opposed to her formularies and articles. On these points he allowed no difference of opinion. His preachers must teach the doctrines of "effectual calling," an instantaneous deliverance from sin, "assurance" and "Christian perfection," or they were no followers of his, and to these doctrines, which in unlearned hands—such as those of the great majority of the lay-preachers—have a strong tendency to Antinomianism with all its dangerous and immoral consequences, the clergy entertained a strong objection. It is very easy to blame them for refusing the use of their pulpits to Wesley, but under the circumstances

they were more than justified, and the attacks upon them—which generally assume the form of accusations of drunkenness and immorality—are wholly out of place. It would be just as reasonable to complain that the Bishop of Liverpool has not yet invited Father Ignatius to commence a “mission” in his cathedral—supposing him to possess one.

In the meantime, whilst Wesley was still professing himself a presbyter of the Church of England, and was engaged in conflict with her Bishops and Clergy, the Methodist body grew up under his care to an importance second only to that of the Church itself. His own account of the matter bears witness to his consummate practical wisdom, and also it must be admitted to his love of absolute power. The explanation was given at one of his conferences, in reply to a question which had probably been prearranged. He began by explaining that whereas Zinzendorf in his dealings with the Moravians was always somewhat secretive, he loved to do things openly, and would therefore tell them all he knew of the matter. A few persons, he explained, had come to him for spiritual counsel and advice in London. Others had done the same thing all over the country. His own desire had been to live in retirement, but he felt when called upon that he could not refuse his help. “Here commenced my power,” he went on, “namely a power to appoint when, where, and how they should meet; and to remove those whose life showed that they had no desire to flee from the wrath to come. And this power remained the same whether the people meeting together were twelve, twelve hundred, or twelve thousand.” These people then offered to subscribe money quarterly. He replied that he would have nothing, because he

wanted nothing which his fellowship would not supply. It was then represented that money was required to pay for the lease of the foundry (in Moorfields, where the meetings of the Methodists were held after their separation from the Moravians), and for putting it in repair. On that ground he allowed the subscription and appointed stewards to receive and expend these moneys. "Let it be remarked," said he, "it was I myself, not the people, who chose the stewards, and appointed each the distinct work wherein he was to help me as long as I chose." The lay-preachers were appointed in the same way. They first offered to serve him as sons, and on those terms he accepted them. His power over the Conference rested upon the same plea of prescription. He had invited the clergy who acted with him, and all the lay-preachers to meet and advise with him. "They did not," said he, "desire the meeting, but I did;" and he goes on to explain that their functions were purely consultative, "I sent for them to advise, not govern me." Nor did he divest himself of any part of his power of admitting or excluding members, stewards, and helpers, or of directing any or all of them in what way they were to work or where they were to execute their functions.

If Louis XIV. could say with truth *L'État c'est moi*, with even greater accuracy could Wesley claim the Methodist body as his own. That body became in this way one of the most singular hierarchies ever created. At the apex was Wesley, and beneath him in regular gradations came the stewards, the "helpers"—now called by a more dignified name—and the assistants who are now described as superintendents. Beneath them in due order came the lay people, divided into bands or classes of twelve, each with its appointed

class-leader, and all owning distinct and unhesitating obedience to Wesley. This was exacted most rigorously. The preachers, for example, were very badly paid, and some of them strove to augment their scanty incomes by printing their sermons and hawking them about when travelling. This Wesley forbade. He was himself a most voluminous writer and compiler, and the preachers were consequently invited to sell his productions as much as possible. More than this, he made a rule that no preacher should print anything whatever, so long as he remained in the Connexion, without its being corrected by Wesley himself; a rule which was probably very necessary, as was also another prohibiting the preachers occupying themselves with the sale of "pills, balsams, drops or medicines of any kind."<sup>4</sup> Obedience of the same unquestioning charac-

\* Not content with supplying medicine for the soul, however, Wesley at one time ventured upon the publication of a book of medicine for the body. "Primitive Physick," as he called this farrago of absurdities, went through thirty editions before 1824; but it is now, one is glad to believe, out of print. Some idea of the extraordinary nature of the practice may be gathered from a few of the prescriptions, taken at random. For one disease, the patient is directed to take an ounce of "live mercury" every morning and a pint of "aqua sulphurata" (diluted sulphuric acid) every afternoon. For intus-susception a pound of mercury is to be swallowed. For an ague, pounded and salted wall-flowers are to be applied to the head. In an apoplexy, a pint of salt and water must be got into the stomach of the patient, and it will certainly bring him round. In the case of a violent bleeding at the nose a piece of white paper must be put under the tongue. For a cancer in the breast the patient is to drink an infusion of the warts from a horse's leg in a pint of warm ale, and to apply goose-dung externally. For a cold in the head the rind of an orange is to be turned inside out and thrust up the nostrils. For a consumption, the patient is to cut a hole in fresh turf and breathe into it for a quarter of an hour every morning. For a fresh cut we are to apply a poultice of toasted cheese; and for a speck in the eye, to blow into it the dried

ter was exacted from every member of the society, even down to the duty of public confession in the class, until every individual fell into his exact place in the hierarchical order.

There were, however, many points in Wesley's system which are open to grave objection. Finding that some converted colliers at Kingswood had replaced their habit of sitting at the ale-house the greater part of the night by praying and singing hymns in the schoolroom until far into the small hours, he sanctioned the "watch-night" as a regular institution, allowing his followers to meet "once a month, near the time of the full moon"—an arrangement which has had the natural effect of producing a plentiful crop of scandals. "Love-feasts"—an imitation of the ancient Ἀγάπη—were also instituted, with, it is said in too many cases, a similar result. "Bands,"—associations, that is to say, of members of the society who had attained to "Christian perfection"—were also formed. Wesley says of them that his "design was not only to direct them to press after perfection, to exercise their every grace, and improve every talent they had received and to incite them to love one another more, and to watch more carefully over each other; but also to have a select company to whom I might unbosom myself on all occasions without reserve, and whom I could propose to all their brethren as patterns of love, of holiness, and of all good works." The idea of these "bands" with their members boasting a sinless perfection was due to the Moravians, but Wesley maintained them long after his separation from that

and fine powder of the *zibethum occidentale*—a cleanly and delicate preparation, for the meaning of which the reader may be referred to the manuals of physic in vogue in the middle ages.

body. In the end, however, they were found to foster spiritual pride to so obnoxious a degree that they had to be given up. It was not so with the "class" upon which indeed the whole system of Methodism rests, and which appears to embody every one of the worst evils of the Roman confessional without one of its counterbalancing advantages. In theory there is much to be said in defence of the practice of confession to a priest. Granting that he is the appointed representative of God and that he has the power of declaring the remission of sins, there is nothing more natural than for the "sin-sick soul" to seek counsel of such a spiritual physician and obtain his medicaments. The implicit secrecy of the confessional takes away moreover many of the objections which otherwise suggest themselves to the system. But the same arguments do not apply to the class-meeting, where there is no spiritual physician of greater weight than the class-leader, and where every member of the class is expected to answer publicly the following questions :—"What known sin have you committed since our last meeting? What temptations have you met with? How were you delivered? What have you thought, said, or done, of which you have any doubt whether it is a sin or not?" Such questions are, of course, never answered fully, but enough may be said to do an immense amount of mischief, and a secret told to a dozen people is no secret at all. What is perhaps worse is the amount of spiritual pride which such a system infallibly fosters. Wesley himself appears to have recognized none of these evils, though his brothers with more acuteness, discerned them at once. It is not a little surprising that the laity did not rise in

protest against this monstrous system, at all events to the point of preventing their wives and daughters from taking part in it.

Having thus established the Methodist body in England, it is not surprising that Wesley should have watched its growth in other countries with eager interest. It cannot be said, however, that the course which he saw fit to adopt with reference to the Methodist society in America, was remarkable for its wisdom or for its consistency with his often repeated protests of loyalty to the Church of his baptism. The story as told by his biographers is a long one, but its main facts lie in a very small compass. Methodism, it would seem, was first planted in America in 1768, and grew with so much rapidity that by 1773 its adherents numbered about a thousand. When the disputes between England and her colonies broke out, Wesley wrote and published, "A Calm Address to the Americans," in which he examined the question whether the English Parliament had power to tax the colonies, deciding in favour of the pretension both on legal and on moral grounds, while he argued strongly against the support which the American cause received in this country as being offered by persons whose sole object was the overthrow of the Government. This address<sup>6</sup> excited great indignation in this country amongst those who were not Methodists, and espe-

<sup>6</sup> In itself it was little more than a popular exposition of the theories enunciated by Johnson in his well-known pamphlet "Taxation no Tyranny;" and as such it was accepted by Johnson himself. "I have thanks likewise to return you," says Johnson in a letter to Wesley preserved amongst the Harwood MSS., "for the addition of your important suffrage to my argument on the American question. To have gained such a mind as yours may justly confirm me in my own opinion."

cially among the political dissenters, one of whom—a Baptist preacher named Caleb Evans, of Bristol—wrote a pamphlet in reply, which brought the saintly Fletcher of Madeley to the defence of his leader. The pamphlet itself did not reach the Americans, a friend to the Methodists having obtained possession of all the copies which were sent to New York, and carefully suppressed them out of fear of the consequences to their luckless readers in the then condition of the American temper. It was, however, impossible altogether to conceal the real character of Wesley's views, and although he urged upon his preachers in America the duty of abstaining from political strife, and of acting as peacemakers on all occasions, the Methodists became objects of suspicion during the war, and their preachers were not unfrequently subjected to the ignominy of "tarring and feathering," or "riding on a rail." Still, however, the body increased until in 1777 the Methodists numbered 7000, ministered to by forty teachers. When the war was over, religious matters were found to be in a bad way. Throughout the Southern States the prevailing form of faith had been that of the Church of England, but the clergy being of course loyalists, had been driven away during the war. The rebels furthermore confiscated the church-property, and when peace was made resolutely refused to restore it, or to make any attempt whatever to provide for the maintenance of religion. Members of the Episcopal Church—which Methodists then were—thus found themselves in an evil case. They had none to baptize their children, to marry them, to administer the sacraments to the living, or to bury the dead. Sundry efforts were made to remedy this state of things. Two young Americans came over in

hope of getting episcopal ordination, but the then Archbishop of Canterbury refused them on the ground of their inability to take the oath of allegiance. In the emergency they applied to Franklin, then American Minister in Paris, and from him they received the characteristic advice to turn Presbyterians, or else to elect a bishop of their own. Something of the kind had, indeed, already been done. Amongst the missionaries sent out by Wesley, had been one Asbury—a man of saintly character, and in many ways the counterpart of Wesley himself. In the progress of the war he had become the head of the Methodist body, and to him they naturally applied themselves. He counselled patience, but they were naturally unwilling to wait, and breaking off their connexion with him and consequently with Wesley, they elected three of the oldest amongst them to ordain others by the imposition of hands. Asbury's influence was sufficiently potent to heal this schism, and by the time the war had ended they were ready for whatever remedy Wesley could suggest.

The remedy came in due time, and it certainly was a bold one, being, as it was, nothing less than a complete schism from the Church of England, and the creation of a new Episcopate deriving its orders from the consecrating hands of Wesley himself. He had, it appears, read Lord King's "Account of the Primitive Church," which had convinced him, as apparently he desired to be convinced, that bishops and presbyters were identical—a fact which has more than once given rise to the remark that we are easily persuaded when convenience or inclination are involved. Wesley had, however, a certain amount of justification for the course which he took. The result of the war

had been, as he pointed out, to totally separate the American colonies from the mother country. The new constitution provided for the Civil Government of the State, but left ecclesiastical matters untouched. At home he had refused to ordain his travelling preachers, but in America the case was different. Here there were bishops : there, there were none. To supply the void, therefore, Wesley called Dr. Coke to his assistance, and having convinced him by the help of Lord King's book, that a priest and a bishop were the same thing, consecrated him Bishop out of hand. A Mr. Creighton, also a clergyman who had become a member of the Methodist Connexion was associated with them, and together they ordained two of the lay-preachers as presbyters, for America, Dr. Coke being afterwards ordained "superintendent." Superintendent and bishop being the same thing, it is not quite easy to guess why Wesley should have deemed this second ordination necessary, but Wesley was not in a mood to make nice distinctions. It is, however, remarkable that in the letters of ordination with which he furnished Dr. Coke, the word "Bishop" does not occur. The expression is, "I have this day set apart *as a superintendent* by the imposition of my hands and prayer (being assisted by other ordained ministers)."

That Wesley was perfectly at ease in his own mind as to the part which he acted on this occasion, is by no means certain. There is a story, indeed, of his having applied to a Greek bishop for episcopal consecration, which his followers deny, but which there is no apparent reason for disbelieving. Be this as it may, the assumption of episcopal authority was universally regarded as a sign of his determination to

separate himself and his followers from communion with the Church of England; and the principal person who so treated it was no other than his brother Charles, whose connexion with Methodism ceased from this time forward. He died a few years later, and was buried in the churchyard of Marylebone, his pall being supported by eight clergymen of the English Church, his attachment to which had, he protested to the last, never wavered.

The end came to John Wesley ere many years were over, but his wonderful constitution kept him an active man until the last. Even in his eighty-sixth year he continued to preach twice daily, rising at four o'clock every morning, and preaching his first sermon at five. On the 1st of February, 1791, he wrote his last letter to America, calling upon his followers there on no account to separate themselves from their brethren on this side of the Atlantic. His conviction of the imminence of his death is expressed in a very remarkable sentence, "time has shaken me by the hand, and death is not far behind." On the 17th of the same month he preached at Lambeth and caught cold after the service was over. His indomitable spirit refused, however, to succumb; and he continued to preach until the following Wednesday (the 23rd), when he delivered his last sermon. From that time he sank gradually into weakness and lethargy, until on the 2nd of March his soul passed painlessly away. He was in the eighty-eighth year of his age; and for sixty-five years he had, without interruption, exercised the functions of his ministry. His complete separation from the Church of England was emphasized by the circumstances of his funeral, which took place in the chapel in the City Road, and at which, though the service used was that

of the Prayer Book, the officiant was his attached colleague and associate Mr. Richardson. His funeral was plain and unostentatious, in accordance with his particular desire, which was, "that there may be no hearse, no coach, no escutcheon, no pomp except the tears of them that loved me, and are following me to Abraham's bosom." Seven-and-thirty years before, in anticipation of death from what he believed to be consumption, he had composed his own epitaph, in which he declared that he died "not leaving, after his debts were paid, ten pounds behind him." When death really came at the last, the proposed epitaph was as true as it had been. Whatever else he may have gained, Wesley certainly profited but little in a worldly point of view by his labours. His life had been one of unremitting toil : he lived always on the plainest possible food, and at his death he left behind him absolutely nothing but the copyrights and current editions of his various works, which were heavily burdened with a debt to the family of his brother Charles.

In estimating the character of Wesley it is difficult in the extreme to be impartial. To his followers it presents itself as wholly perfect and flawless, whilst on the other hand thousands of thoroughly religious people can see in him only a wild and mistaken enthusiast. As usual the truth will probably be found to lie between the two extremes. The notion which at one time prevailed that he was a hypocrite or an impostor, may be at once dismissed. He was neither the one nor the other, but a man of perfect purity of intention, animated from his earliest days to the hour of his death, by the sincerest desire to promote the glory of God, and to rescue sinners

from the destruction which in his belief awaited them. "Wesley," said Dr. Johnson on one occasion, "thought of religion only." But that his judgment and discretion were always equal in excellence to his intentions, can hardly be pretended even by those who most reverence the saintliness of his character. When he began to work the Church of England had sunk into a torpor from which it was necessary that she should be roused. Such a lethargy was, however, not surprising. For two centuries England had been afflicted with the *odium theologicum*. Her Church had been reformed by Henry VIII. ; re-reformed by Mary ; re-constituted on a new basis under Elizabeth ; practically abolished by the Commonwealth, and restored by an indignant nation under Charles II. After such a series of convulsions, nothing was more natural than the desire for peace which animated the mass of the people who, whatever may have been their speculative opinions, clung as a body with singular tenacity to the Church during the whole period from the Restoration until 1830. Natural though it was, however, the lethargy, which had crept over the spiritual life of England, under the rule of William III., and which continued under Anne and the Georges, was hardly healthy, and in the eyes of a man of Wesley's character must have been shocking in the extreme. And with him to discern an evil or a wrong, meant taking instant steps to remedy it. The point open to criticism is, of course, the nature of the steps so taken, and here it is that Wesley appears to have been at fault. With the best intentions in the world he fell into the error of supposing that the world was to be reformed by a realization of the mystical reveries of the German dreamers, and he involved himself still farther by adopting a

system of theology which placed belief in the position which the Sermon on the Mount, and the Epistle of St. James, assign to action. He complicated matters still further by the encouragement which his system afforded to enthusiasm and extravagance of every kind. He had to deal with ignorant people—indeed Methodism has at no time made way with the highly educated and intellectual class—and he appears to have ignored the patent fact that amongst the ignorant, faith speedily degenerates into superstition, while the appetite for signs and wonders is insatiable.

Signs and wonders being demanded, they were of course produced in abundance, and Wesley, not merely listened to the crazy tales which were told to him, but implicitly accepted them as signs of the Divine character of his mission. More than this, he imagined that he too possessed the power of working miracles, and his diary contains not a few stories which, for the sake of his own character, he would have shown greater wisdom in suppressing. But wisdom was not pre-eminently characteristic of John Wesley. With all his virtues, and they were supreme, he was lacking in that discretion which a more worldly-minded person would have possessed. The statesman who complained that —“had not a single redeeming vice about him,” had more reason on his side, than most people imagine. The one failing of Wesley was, that he was in many ways too good, and was wholly above the vice of scepticism. Yet a little wholesome scepticism would have kept him from swallowing all the absurdities of the Moravians and the still greater follies of his own followers. He would have seen that the cases which he explained on the hypothesis of diabolical possession were really cases of hysteria, and that con-

scious or unconscious imposture had not a little to do with those shocking exhibitions of emotion to which he confidently appealed as proofs of his authority. And furthermore being one of the most devoted men that ever breathed, he fancied an equal measure of devotion possible in those with whom he dealt. Hence the disastrous failure of the Kingswood School. It was started with excellent intentions, but a more absurd institution never sprang from a pedant's brain. The children were to rise at four in summer and winter alike ; they were to spend an hour in private in reading, singing, prayer, and self-examination. From five to seven they breakfasted and worked, always under the eye of a master. They were to be altogether prevented from playing, and they were to work in school from seven to eleven, and from one to five. Their food was to be the simplest possible, and on Wednesdays and Fridays no meat was allowed. The school was, in a sense, typical of its founder. All the institutions for which he is responsible, make as little allowance for the weaknesses of human nature, and as a consequence in aiming at an ideal perfection have an unfortunate tendency to make men hypocrites.

For the rest it cannot be doubted that the powerful principle of religion which Wesley and his followers diffused, has in the main produced good effects. Many men and many women have been reclaimed from evil courses and sinful lives, and many have been sustained in a very remarkable way under poverty and afflictions which might have daunted the strongest spirits. In death too, the soothing and healing power of religion has seldom been more strikingly exemplified than amongst the Wesleyan Methodists. That their theology is defective, and that it tends sometimes

almost in the direction of immorality may be admitted, but at the same time it is impossible to deny that some of its worst features were the direct result of Wesley's earnest repudiation of the doctrines associated with the name of Calvin, which for more than a century had cast a black shadow over the religious life of England. Of the schism in the Church of England which Wesley created it is less easy to speak with indulgence, but it requires no especial perspicacity to discover that if he could have foreseen the lengths to which his followers would go, he would have carefully guarded against the division which he fancied had become inevitable. The last thing which the author of the "Calm Address to the Americans," and the steady opponent of Dr. Price the Unitarian, would have desired, was assuredly the creation of the huge dissenting organization, the members of which appear to be in too many instances animated rather by a hatred of the Church of England than by a love for that spiritual religion of which John Wesley was the ardent and faithful exponent. Yet that the Methodist Society must inevitably assume that character was from the first evident to not a few of Wesley's best friends, and it is not a little singular that he—in other respects one of the shrewdest of men—should have failed to appreciate the truth. That he did not is quite certain, at all events, until very shortly before the close of his life. After his consecration of Dr. Coke, however, it is absurd to talk of Wesley as some of his later admirers have thought fit to do, as having always been a true son of the Church of England.

One point yet remains to be noticed—the fact that Wesley addressed himself almost exclusively to the lower classes. Whitefield had the Countess of Huntingdon to support him, and in his congregations

maids of honour and lords of the bedchamber jostled the vilest and the most depraved of both sexes. But with Wesley matters were very different. He found his audience less amongst the openly vicious and criminal, than amongst the more seriously disposed of the poorer classes, and his congregations were seldom swelled by the great and powerful. The explanation is probably to be found in the fact that Wesley preached a systematic religion which permeated every action of life, and which was maintained by an organization at the root of which lies the class with its weekly meetings and its penny a week contributions from all the faithful. Whitefield, on the other hand, preached a strongly emotional religion which readily adapted itself to any system, and the tenets of which might be held equally by members of the Church of England and by the most dissident of dissenters. The consequences are what we see. Whitefieldism is practically extinct. There are, it is true, a few chapels which still bear the name of the Countess of Huntingdon, but their number dwindles year by year, and the followers of that particular cult show signs of absorption at no remote period in the great body of Congregationalist or Independent dissenters, from whom indeed, as far as religious belief is concerned, they differ little if at all. Wesleyanism on the contrary, is more vigorous than ever, thanks mainly to Wesley's genius for organization. On all sides the chapels of the sects are multiplied, and with the increasing wealth of the age they have grown in splendour and commodiousness. Still, however, is it true that "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble" are to be found amongst the members of the society. Now exactly as in Wesley's time, the system attracts almost exclusively

the members of the lower section of the middle and the upper rank of the working classes, and it is Wesley's greatest glory that his life was devoted to the creation and elaboration of a system which made religion vital amongst a number of persons who are usually found to be most utterly impervious to its influences.

## CHARLES CHURCHILL—PARSON AND POET.

THE student of literature, in examining the armory of the satirists, cannot fail to be struck by the variety of weapons which he finds in that vast storehouse. The terrible battle-axe of Juvenal, the keen and delicate dagger of Horace, the trenchant blade of Dryden, the small sword of Boileau, the venomous rapier of Pope, the scourge of small cords of Moore, the big blunderbuss of Theodore Hook, and the jewelled lancet of Jerrold, by turns attract his attention. The man whose name stands at the head of this page, though one of the company of satirists, used, however, none of these weapons. It is true that he wielded sometimes an arm scarcely inferior in power and keenness to the weapon of Dryden, and that, in isolated passages, he is sometimes not inferior in delicacy and precision to Pope; but neither of these was, properly speaking, his model. He was a writer of intense and original genius, and preferred indubitably to do his fighting with weapons of his own choosing. The favourite was one like that of Giant Despair—"a grievous crab-tree cudgel,"—not in itself a bad weapon, nor by any means unfit for the foes with whom he had to cope, yet one from which small glory was to be gained, if indeed its use have not had a prejudicial effect upon his reputation. That reputation has, in truth, sunk very low in these latter days, so that it is now considered a mark of pedantry to quote him, and of want of taste to admire him.

Various causes may be assigned for this declension in popular esteem, over and above the occasional roughnesses of his style;—first and chiefly, the inferiority of his subjects. Pope himself—despite his magnificent genius for versification—could scarcely have made much of Sandwich, Dashwood, and Bubb Dodington; while his literary quarrels were with a crew of hireling malignants, upon whom “satire and sense” were alike wasted. Again, it must be remembered that Churchill was prodigal of fame. One of the most careless of writers, he revised little and pruned less. Correction he detested, calling it “cutting away his own flesh,” while his need of money constantly forced him to publish solely for the sake of pecuniary gain. Consequently, as the elder Disraeli observes, justly enough in the main, “he enjoyed all his revenues while he lived; posterity owes him little, and pays him nothing.” Yet, in spite of all his faults, of all his carelessness, recklessness, and extravagance, there is something wonderfully attractive in the physiognomy of the “fighting parson,” as his rough, pugnacious, yet kindly face gleams upon us through the dim perspective of history. His life, too, was passed in the midst of great and stirring excitements, social and political; and this alone is sufficient reason for his astonishing popularity during life, and the decline in his reputation after his death.

The school of artificial poets, which commenced with the immediate predecessors of Dryden, had found its most glorious follower in Pope, who was at the zenith of his fame in the year of Churchill’s birth—1731. The impression he produced upon English literature was one not altogether good; but the school of servile imitators which he founded can scarcely have dreamed

at this time of the revulsion in public taste towards a more masculine model, which was to be brought about by the child that was born in this year. The time for his work soon came, however. He was hardly thirty when his first work appeared. In the mean time he had gone through that *jeunesse orageuse* which seems the inevitable preparation with so many poets and men of genius for noble work. Let us glance for a moment over the events of those thirty years. His father, curate of St. John the Evangelist, Westminster, held also the living of Rainham, in Essex. Pluralist though he was, he was miserably poor; but he managed to educate his sons respectably. Charles was the eldest, and was sent to Westminster at eight years of age. The school was in high reputation in those days: Nichols was head master; Johnson, afterwards a bishop, second. Dr. Pierson Lloyd, who afterwards became head master, was usher at the fourth form, and Vincent Bourne, dear to the lovers of elegant Latinity, at the fifth. Churchill was a sturdy, idle, yet clever boy, apparently always in scrapes, yet contriving to extricate himself without much difficulty, and to win the love of his masters, one of whom, Lloyd, was to the day of his death his kindest friend. His schoolfellows became noticeable men,—Warren Hastings, Richard Cumberland, Robert Lloyd, George Colman, and last, but not least, William Cowper, were amongst them. The friendship he formed with the third and last of these endured through life; Lloyd, indeed, died of grief on hearing of his death, and Cowper has celebrated the “great Churchill” in verse and prose. Young though they were, these boys appear to have had a love for letters, and Churchill would seem to have been in no way behindhand amongst the “little poets

of Westminster" of whom Cowper speaks, who "would strive to set a distich upon six and five." Had he been then encouraged he would probably have devoted himself to literature, but unhappily his father had other views for him. As he says in the "Author," published in 1763, he was—

Born to the Church, and for the gown decreed,  
Ere it was known that he should learn to read,—

a most unwise decision, as matters turned out, since to it may be traced most of the errors and follies which disgraced his life. He stood for the Westminster scholarship, but failed to obtain it; presented himself at Oxford for matriculation, but either laughed at the examiners or refused to answer their simple questions, as below his dignity. Then he tried Cambridge, and was entered of Trinity College. Mathematics were probably not his *forte*; but whatever may have been the reason, his stay in Cambridge was of the briefest,—one term at the most was its limit. Returned to London, and established in his father's house at Westminster, he was next guilty of the greatest folly of his life—that which, combined with his future assumption of the sacred office, perverted his aims and infused bitterness into the sweetest cup which popular applause could offer. He was, in short, married within the rules of the Fleet, to a vulgar and commonplace Westminster girl named Scot. The marriage was ill-assorted, and came to its natural end in a very few years—when, by mutual consent, the husband and wife separated for ever.

On the discovery of his marriage his father received him into his house, and he set quietly to work to qualify for orders, which in those days, as in these,

he could do without a degree. Having reached the canonical age, he was ordained deacon by Dr. Willis, the then Bishop of Bath and Wells, and after acting for some little time as curate in the village of South Cadbury, on the borders of Wiltshire, he was ordained priest by Sherlock, then Bishop of London, on the curacy of his father's charge at Rainham. He fairly hated his profession, was a dull preacher, and a worse parish priest. He says himself, indeed, that "sleep, at his bidding, crept from pew to pew;" whilst the volume of sermons published after his death proves painfully how little his heart was in his work. His father gave him the curacy of Rainham; but the stipend was too small for him to live, and he was compelled to open a school—last refuge of a poverty-stricken scholar. Even that miserable expedient was failing when his father died, and the parishioners of St. John, with whom the choice lay, elected the son to succeed him. Back to Westminster he came accordingly; but the change was little to his advantage. "The emoluments of his situation," says Dr. Kippis, "not amounting to a full hundred pounds a year, in order to improve his finances, he undertook to teach young ladies to read and write English with propriety and correctness, and was engaged for this purpose in the boarding-school of Mrs. Dennis. Mr. Churchill conducted himself in his new employment with all the decorum becoming his clerical profession." Probably he did; but it is easy to fancy how his eager heart was beating itself out against the prison-bars of his outward circumstances, daily yearning more impatiently for the period of his emancipation from a service which he regarded as but a grinding slavery.

Thus returned to his old situation and associates,

the old temptations resumed their place with tenfold power. He rushed into a whirlpool of dissipation; very wrong, certainly, but, let us hope, not inexcusably so. He was poor, in debt, unhappy in his marriage relations; he had executions constantly in his house, and was ever in fear of arrest: can it be a matter for surprise, then, that he chose to flee from himself and to drown the memory of his cares in dissipation and uproarious company? One good Samaritan came to his help. His former tutor, Dr. Lloyd, interferred, met his creditors with an offer of composition, and lent the sum necessary for its completion. It is worthy of mention, that when the frowns of fortune were turned to smiles, Churchill honourably repaid his creditors every shilling he owed them, with interest, and was not forgetful of the good friend who had helped him out of this slough of debt. If Dr. Lloyd had desired, however, to win back his quondam pupil to the service of the Church to which he belonged, he was already too late. She had ceased to have any hold over him, and the period of professional authorship was about to commence.

A very few months had passed since Robert Lloyd, weary of gerund-grinding in Westminster School, deserted his ushership to make his appearance before the world as author of "The Actor," a poetical epistle addressed to his and Churchill's friend, Bonnel Thornton. The poem chanced to be successful (though it has now been long forgotten), and its author was declared by the critics to be a true poet, and entitled to a high place in literature. Encouraged by his friend's good fortune, and feeling the "divine afflatus" stirring within him, Churchill determined on imitating him, and soon offered his first work to the booksellers.

This was a poem in Hudibrastic verse, entitled “The Bard ;” but it was probably very weak, since the booksellers one and all rejected it, and the author never allowed it to see the light, even when his fame would have sold anything. Losing no time in vain complaints over the insensibility of publishers to works of genius, he tried his hand again, directing his satire this time against the Dean and Chapter of Westminster, against whom he had a particular grudge. This would doubtless have been published, since neither Dr. Pearce nor his colleagues were by any means popular ; but the cautious bookseller obtained a legal opinion, which was so decided as to the libellous character of the work, that it was necessarily withheld. A second failure such as this would have daunted some men—not so with Churchill. He made a third effort, profiting by past experience, and choosing a wider subject. During two months he attended the theatres diligently, and at the end of that time produced the “*Rosciad*.” The poem went the round of the publishers, but no one could be found to offer more than 5*l.* for it. Churchill had fixed his price at 20*l.* ; and in this posture of affairs, dangerous though the experiment undoubtedly was, he determined on publishing at his own risk. His means were, however, insufficient to advertise his work extensively, and accordingly, after two obscure announcements, the “*Rosciad*” was published anonymously, at the price of a shilling, in March 1761.

The corner was turned at last—the long, dreary period of expectancy was at last over. Like many another poet, Churchill woke up to find himself famous. To use a modern phrase, the “*Rosciad*” was a “great success.” Severe in satire, pungent in expression, appealing to the most prominent taste of

the town,—everything combined to draw upon the work the admiration it deserved. Churchill maintained a strict incognito, which, however, only increased the anxiety of the public to discover the author. Save only the actors who winced under the scourge, every one was delighted with the poem, and a ferocious notice in the *Critical Review*, then under the editorship of Smollett, served but to increase its popularity. In this article Smollett undertook to solve the riddle which every one was asking. “We are ready,” he said, “to make the conclusion in the author’s own words—‘Who is it? Lloyd!’ We will not pretend, however, absolutely to assert that Mr. Lloyd wrote this poem, but we may venture to affirm that it is the production jointly or severally of the new triumvirate of wits [Colman, Lloyd, and Thornton], who never let an opportunity slip of singing their own praises. ‘Caw me, caw thee,’ as Sawney says. And so it is; they go and scratch one another like Scotch pedlars.” These flowers of rhetoric, worthy of the delicate and graceful author of “Peregrine Pickle,” soon evoked an answer. The *St. James’s Chronicle* of the following Saturday contained two advertisements, from George Colman and Robert Lloyd respectively, denying, in the most distinct and emphatic manner, that either was concerned in the writing or publication of the “Rosciad.” The inquiry after the author still continued; but after a few days a third advertisement appeared, stating that Charles Churchill was the sole author, and that his “Apology, addressed to the Critical Reviewers,” was in preparation, and would appear shortly.

In the “Rosciad,” all alike, strong and weak, poor and rich, writhed under the stinging lash of the satirist.

Garrick indeed escaped, the poet choosing to pour upon him as was but just all the praise which he withheld from inferior artists. At the same time the criticism is discriminating. The “*Snarling critics, ignorant as vain*” have found fault with Garrick’s figure, and complain of his “*traps for applause.*” Churchill’s reply is,—

For me by Nature form’d to judge with phlegm,  
I can’t acquit by wholesale nor condemn.  
The best things carried to excess are wrong :  
The start may be too frequent, pause too long ;  
But, only used in proper time and place,  
Severest judgment must allow their grace.

If bunglers form’d on Imitation’s plan,  
Just in the way that monkeys mimic man,  
Their copied scene with mangled arts disgrace,  
And pause and start with the same vacant face ;  
We join the critic laugh, these tricks we scorn,  
Which spoil the scenes they mean them to adorn.  
But when from Nature’s pure and genuine source,  
These strokes of acting flow with generous force,  
When in the features all the soul’s portray’d,  
And passions such as Garrick’s are display’d,  
To me they seem from quickest feelings caught—  
Each start is Nature, and each pause is Thought.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Judges, as the several parties came,  
With Temper heard, with Judgment weigh’d each claim,  
And in their sentence happily agreed,  
In name of both, Great Shakspere thus decreed :

If manly sense, if nature link’d with art ;  
If thorough knowledge of the human heart ;  
If powers of acting, vast and unconfined ;  
If fewest faults with greatest beauties join’d ;  
If strong expression and strange powers which lie  
Within the magic circle of the eye ;  
If feelings which few hearts like his can know,  
And which no face so well as his can show,  
Deserve the preference ;— Garrick take the chair,  
Nor quit it till thou place an equal there.

Garrick was sufficiently ill-advised to treat this noble panegyric lightly, and to hint to some of those about him that he "supposed the fellow had done it with a view to the freedom of the playhouse"—a sneer of which actors, not perhaps without sufficient excuse, are singularly fond. Other actors were handled with great though discriminating severity, their characteristics being hit off in a line, a phrase, or an epithet with peculiar happiness.

Foote was terribly enraged, and to relieve his feelings wrote a dialogue bitterly lampooning Lloyd and Churchill, the latter of whom he dubbed, with his usual love of alliteration and carelessness of accuracy, the "Clumsy Curate of Clapham." A wholesome dread of further punishment induced him, however, to suppress this work. The wrath of the rest of the actors manifested itself in a somewhat different way; they were chiefly anxious for personal battle with their reviler. The appearance of the brawny figure of the "satirical parson" was, however, the general signal for the dispersion of these noisy braggarts. On one occasion Yates, whom he had handled more harshly than most of the other actors, being at the "Rose Tavern" at the same time with Churchill, fell into a quarrel with him, and proposed to settle it "in the Dutch manner,"—that is, with knives. Churchill quietly assented, but Yates, who was not prepared for this ready acquiescence, and who had hoped to get a reputation for courage without the trouble of a contest, hastily dropped his weapon and sneaked from the room amidst roars of laughter, telling his opponent that "he should hear from him." It is hardly necessary to add that the poet never did. It must be owned however, that Yates had abundant reason for feeling

aggrieved. Churchill's attack upon him is one of the bitterest things in the *Rosciad*,—

In characters of low and vulgar mould,  
Where Nature's coarsest features we behold,  
Where destitute of every decent grace,  
Unmanner'd jests are blurted in your face,  
There Yates with justice strict attention draws,  
Acts truly from himself and gains applause.  
But when, to please himself or charm his wife,  
He aims at something in politer life,  
When blindly thwarting Nature's stubborn plan,  
He treads the stage by way of gentleman,  
The clown, who no one touch of breeding knows,  
Looks like Tom Errand dress'd in Clincher's clothes.  
Fond of his dress, fond of his person grown,  
Laugh'd at by all, and to himself unknown,  
From side to side he struts, he smiles, he prates,  
And seems to wonder what's become of Yates.

Davies was less fortunate still,—

On my life !  
That Davies hath a very pretty wife !  
Statesman all over ! in plots famous grown !  
He mouths a sentence as curs mouth a bone !

The satire drove him from the stage, and he became a bookseller. It was in his shop that Johnson afterwards beat Miller, the publisher of his dictionary.

These and similar testimonies to the success of the “*Rosciad*” fade, however, into nothing before the enormous multitude of pamphlets in prose and verse, which poured from the press in reply or criticism. “*Answers*,” “*Churchilliads*,” “*Anti-Rosciads*,” “*Triumvirates*,” “*Examiners*,” “*Farthing Candles*,” and their like, did all that could be done by dulness and malignity against the most telling satire of the day. Their only effect was to increase the popularity of the poem against which they were directed, since, in pur-

suance of a singular law of compensation, it generally happens that undeserved abuse is by no means a bad stepping-stone to success. Murphy, less cautious than Foote, published his answer, in the preface to which he announced his intention of combining the excellences of Pope and Dryden. He succeeded, however, in proving himself equally scurrilous and filthy.

Scarcely a month had elapsed when the public were again called around "the prize-ring of literature," as the domain of satire has been not inaptly called, to witness the second appearance of the "noted bruiser." The promised "Apology" appeared, and was met with as great applause as had greeted the "Rosciad." The blows were as severe and as well applied, and the public were by no means ill-pleased to see the merciless judgments of the *Critical Review* repaid with more than equal severity. The first half of the poem was taken up with a protest against the groundless jealousies and mean antipathies which were then, as now, the lot of almost every claimant for the honours of literature; while the latter was occupied by a bitter depreciation of the theatre, and a vindication of the author's right to choose it as a subject for satire. Those whom the "Rosciad" had spared, the "Apology" fiercely attacked, and a new set of victims was selected for the satirical thong. Smollett received a more severe castigation than even he was in the habit of bestowing. His novels and history disposed of, the tragedy of "The Regicide," on which he had fondly hoped to build his fame, came in for a share of the satirist's tender mercies :—

Who ever read the "Regicide" but swore  
The author wrote as man ne'er wrote before ?

After Smollett, Garrick, whom the “*Rosciad*” had spared, and who had affected to treat his escape lightly, received his award. The author describes how fortune “can take a hero from a puppet-show,” and then goes on to tell how,—

Forgetful of himself, he rears the head,  
And scorns the dunghill where he first was bred ;  
Conversing now with well-dress’d kings and queens,  
With gods and goddesses behind the scenes,  
He sweats beneath the terror-nodding plume,  
Taught by mock honours real pride to assume.  
On this great stage, the world, no monarch e’er  
Was half so haughty as a monarch player.

Garrick felt the attack bitterly, and though he managed to reconcile himself to his satirist, it long rankled in his mind, until he at last relieved himself in some sufficiently bad verses in the “*Fribbleriad*. ”

The strength which distinguished the “*Rosciad*” was equally conspicuous in the “*Apology*,” and redeemed the thousand faults with which it might have been charged. There were, too, occasional flashes of genuine poetic fire, which relieved the coarse and abrupt tone by which it was generally characterized. Over and above these things, there was a determined war made upon hypocrisy and a freedom from every species of cant, which were pleasant novelties in literature. All these promised most healthily for Churchill’s influence upon his age ;—it is sad to record how soon these hopes were crushed, how early this promise was blighted.

From this time forward the manner of Churchill’s life was changed. He threw off the sober garb of his clerical profession, and appeared about town, “dressed,” says a contemporary writer, “in a blue coat with gold buttons, lace and ruffles.” Pearce, Dean of West-

minster, the “dull dean,” of a later satire, offered a remonstrance on one or two occasions, but was met with indifference and even contempt. The parishioners of St. John’s expostulated with more effect, and the poet resigned his cure in that parish. Quarrels and extravagances, equal on both sides, had long before separated him from his wife; but he now put an end to her complaints by settling a liberal allowance upon her. With the layman’s dress he put on the most un-clerical of characters, and became one of the great army of literature. Dissipation, luxury, and idleness were the qualities for which he was most distinguished; he posed, in a word, as a “town-rake,” as Lord Mahon forcibly and not altogether unjustly styles him. “The stings and arrows of an avenging conscience” could not, however, be altogether turned aside. The autumn of the year whose spring had witnessed the publication of the “Rosciad,” saw the author’s third work, “Night.” Here with a kind of railing sadness he disclaims any intention of braving the opinion of the world, but intimates his earnest desire of escaping from it. It is easy indeed to see how his soul, worn by conscience, loved any sorrow rather than its own, and sought relief in the consolations of friendship beneath the veil of that night which “heals or hides our care.” The poem affords a key to the secret griefs of Churchill’s mournful and broken life. In other places we get glimpses of him as he stumbles and totters through that “succession of escapes from falling,” which Carlyle has defined our life to be. Now, however, we see him grovelling in the dust, yielding to each and all of the manifold temptations arising out of his peculiar and ardent temperament, his companions, position, and antecedents. Yet it is hard to be severe

upon him, since the same qualities which led him into wrong, when otherwise directed, were the not unfrequent sources of his best and noblest actions. Let it be remembered, too, that he did not write his own life,—that was left for his enemies to do, and how they did it, it is not very difficult to guess. As it is we have ample information as to how often he fell; the recording angel only has the account of how often he vanquished the tempter.

“Night” was in the form of an epistle to Robert Lloyd, and was probably suggested to Churchill by a poem of similar form addressed by Wilkes to his friend Armstrong under the title of “Day.” The *Critical Review* exercised its murderous wit as usual upon it. “This ‘Night,’” they sententiously observe, “like many others at this time of year, is very cold, long, dark, and dirty, which will not induce many to walk out in it.” Looked at in the light of the present day, it will be found to contain, amongst much that is good, a large quantity of doubtful morality, and much that is indefensible both in versification and tendency. The world and its opinions are met with hearty scorn, petty conventionalities are honestly and boldly faced; but it not unfrequently happens that in defying the externals of morality the heart of it is attacked, and in exhibiting his contempt for the prettinesses of poetry, the writer errs by disregarding some of its cardinal laws. Dubious sentiments and prosaic lines occasionally intrude, betraying the haste of the writer and marring the effect of his work. Its interest does not depend, however, upon either its diction or its sentiments; the one circumstance which renders it remarkable is the inclination which it discovers on the part of the author to enter the field of political warfare. It was, indeed,

difficult in those times for an honest and really earnest man to hold his peace. Vice and corruption sat in high places, and the friends of liberty groaned under the cruellest oppressions. One of the first acts of the King (George III.), on his accession to the throne in 1760, had been to elevate his ex-tutor, Lord Bute, to the rank of Privy Councillor, and from that station he rose in the following year to that of Secretary of State. The new administration adopted measures to remove every man of real political power from office, and to replace him by a conveniently subservient creature. Pitt, "the darling of the people," had resigned;—

What honest man but would with joy submit  
To bleed with Cato and retire with Pitt?

A general election took place in March and April, 1761, when, according to Lord Mahon, corruption was more notoriously rife than at any period in the history of England during the last hundred years. It went so far, indeed, that bribery threw off the thin disguises which it usually wore, and exhibited itself with unblushing effrontery in public. An expectant member of Parliament needed no astute electioneering agent, since boroughs openly advertised themselves for sale.

Such a time was ripe for a demagogue, and Wilkes was not slow to seize the opportunity thus offered. Learned, witty, courageous, and untroubled with scruples, it would have been difficult to find any one better fitted for the part he had to play. He conquered even the staid and prejudiced Johnson. "His name," says the latter, "has been sounded from pole to pole as the phoenix of convivial felicity;" adding, in less stilted but more happy phrase, "Jack has great

variety of talk; Jack is a scholar, and Jack has the manners of a gentleman." His manner was, indeed, so fascinating, that he was accustomed to boast that, with half an hour's start, he would, in spite of his ugliness, make more way with the handsomest woman in the room than the most admired of his friends. Thus qualified, and having constantly upon his lips the loudest professions of love for truth, right, and justice, it can be no matter for surprise that he should have fascinated Churchill. But beyond his personal qualifications, the sympathies of the poet were naturally dignified and honourable; he believed that the struggle in which Wilkes was engaged was one of right against might, of freedom against oppression, of the rights and liberties of Englishmen against Scottish and German tyrants. To the representative of such ideas the impulsive and generous temperament of Churchill was irresistibly attracted. The fascination of manner completed the work which political inclination had begun. Once together, they assimilated like two globules of quicksilver. Their alliance was, at all events on Churchill's side, sincere and disinterested; while, as far as Wilkes was concerned, it was as hearty as the shallow and selfish nature of the demagogue would permit it to be. Churchill's enthusiasm for his friend never seems to have wavered. He regarded him as the embodiment of a great and lofty principle, persecution made him only more admirable, opposition served only to bring out the poet's loyalty. However mistaken Churchill may have been in selecting Wilkes as the god of his idolatry, the fact of his devotion is one great redeeming feature in his character. It was dictated by pure and honest motives, and is entitled to the more honour since it must have been entirely disinterested. To

Wilkes Churchill therefore dedicated his powers henceforward ; his loves and hatreds, hopes and fears, ambitions and despair, were ever afterwards those of his friend, and the alliance had a remarkable effect upon both history and literature.

The first-fruit of this friendship was the production of a journal with the title of the *North Briton*, in opposition to a paper which Bute and his adherents had started, called the *Briton*. While this was in preparation, however, Churchill produced the first book of the "Ghost," based on the Cock Lane Ghost, which then startled the town. The poem is not one of the author's best works, but it appears to have served much the same purpose that Byron gained by "Don Juan;"—it was a kind of poetical scrap-book, not very carefully written, in which the author set down from time to time such things as struck his fancy or served his purpose. It is chiefly memorable for an attack on Johnson under the name of Pomposo, in which he spoke with great and not undeserved severity of the remissness of the "Great Lexicographer" in the matter of the subscriptions to his edition of Shakspeare. He had promised his subscribers that it should be ready before Christmas, 1757. "Yet," says Boswell, "nine years elapsed before it saw the light. His throes in bringing it forth had been severe and remittent; and at last we may almost conclude that the Cæsarian operation was performed by the knife of Churchill, whose upbraiding satire I daresay made Johnson's friends urge him to despatch.

He for subscribers baits his hook,  
And takes your cash—but where's the book ?  
No matter where ; wise fear, you know,  
Forbids the robbing of a foe ;  
But what, to serve our private ends,  
Forbids the cheating of our friends ?

Churchill was less just in representing Johnson as a believer in the clumsy imposture of the Cock Lane Ghost, since it was mainly through him that it was discovered. Johnson's credulity in even listening to so transparently foolish a story deserved, however, some part of the severity under which he smarted. And that Johnson did so smart is unquestionable. He could never in after-life be induced to admit that Churchill was anything but a "dull fellow"—which with all his faults he certainly was not—and in spite of all his sympathy with Churchill's dislike of the Scotch, he could never be induced to admit any merit, literary or social, in him.

The earlier part of the "Ghost" contains some graceful satirical writing in which the experience of a fortune-teller of the gullibility of mankind is described. As a whole, however, the poem is hardly likely to be remembered, nor did its author anticipate for it a better fate. It was, to quote his own words,—

A mere amusement at the most ;  
A trifle fit to wear away  
The horrors of a rainy day ;  
A slight shot-silk for summer wear,  
Just as our modern statesmen are.

From this period dates Churchill's connexion with the *North Briton*. To it he contributed regularly from the very first; but there are now no means of judging which were his papers, and which those of Wilkes. In none, however, is the power exhibited equal to that displayed in his verse,—a fact of which he was doubtless equally conscious with the rest of the world. Verse, indeed, seems to have been the most natural form in which his thoughts found expression. As he

himself says, in some of the last and most earnest lines he ever wrote,—

Whether I will or no,  
Such as they are, my thoughts in measure flow ;  
Convinced, determined, I in prose begin,  
But ere I write one sentence verse creeps in,  
And taints me through and through ; by this good light  
In verse I talk by day, I dream by night !  
If now and then I curse, my curses chime,  
Nor can I pray unless I pray in rhyme.

On one occasion he sent an article to press, but at the last moment withdrew it to remodel it in rhyme. While his work was in progress he submitted it to Wilkes, who was delighted with it, and expressed his satisfaction in no measured terms. "It is personal," said he, "it is poetical, it is political—it must succeed!" and he was right. "The Prophecy of Famine: a Scottish Pastoral," appeared in January, 1763, and was rapturously received by the public. In it, indeed, Churchill attains to the greatest height he ever reached in political satire. Bitter though it is against their country, even Scotchmen are forced to admit its excellence. "It must sheathe its sting in its laughable extravagance," says Campbell, in his *Specimens of the British poets*. Lord Mahon, whose political views are of course strongly opposed to those of the *North Briton*, says that "it may be read with all the admiration which the most vigorous powers of verse, with the most lively touches of wit, can earn in the cause of slander and falsehood." To those who regard it without political prejudice it seems, however, perfectly admirable. It is wonderfully terse and incisive in expression, and the verse has a roll and sonority which inevitably remind the reader of Churchill's great exemplar—Dryden. It is comparatively free, too, from the strangely prosaic

lines which so often disfigure Churchill's verse ; and the language is, as a rule, undefiled by the Latinisms which mar the writings of his contemporaries. Some of his admirers protested that " Mr. Pope was quite outdone,"—a remark which is, however, unquestionably absurd, since, in his particular walk of art, Pope is still unequalled. It may be safely affirmed, nevertheless, that there are very few things in Dryden superior, while in a certain heavy, dashing, cut-and-thrust manner it is without its equal in the English language.

The poem itself was an attack on Scotland which derived its strength as it found its occasion in the popular dislike of Lord Bute, and in the dread which the English people as a nation felt of a renewal of the Jacobite insurrection. How strong and how widely diffused this sentiment was readers of Boswell hardly need to be told. Never, however, did it find more pungent expression than in Churchill's vigorous verse,—

Two boys, whose birth beyond all question springs  
From great and glorious, though forgotten kings,  
Shepherds of Scottish lineage, born and bred  
On the same bleak and barren mountain's head,  
By niggard Nature doom'd on the same rocks  
To spin out life and starve themselves and flocks.  
Fresh as the morning which enrobed in mist,  
The mountain's top with usual dulness kist ;  
Jockey and Sawney to their labours rose :  
Soon clad, I ween, where Nature needs no clothes,  
Where from their youth inured to winter skies,  
Dress and her vain refinements they despise.

Jockey, whose manly high-boned cheeks to crown,  
With freckles spotted flamed the golden down,  
With meikle art could on the bagpipes play,  
E'en from the rising to the setting day ;  
Sawney as long without remorse could bawl  
Home's madrigals and ditties from Fingal.

Oft at his strains all natural though rude,  
 The Highland lass forgot her want of food,  
 And, while she scratch'd her lover into rest,  
 Sank pleased though hungry on her Sawney's breast.

Far as the eye could reach no tree was seen,  
 Earth clad in russet scorn'd the lively green.  
 The plague of locusts they secure defy,  
 For in three hours a grasshopper must die.  
 No living thing, whate'er its food, feasts there,  
 But the chameleon who can feast on air.  
 No birds, except as birds of passage, flew ;  
 No bee was known to hum, no dove to coo.  
 No streams as amber smooth, as amber clear,  
 Were seen to glide, or heard to warble here.  
 Rebellious spring which through the country ran,  
 Furnish'd with bitter draughts the steady clan,  
 No flowers embalm'd the air but one white rose,  
 Which on the tenth of June by instinct blows.<sup>1</sup>  
 By instinct blows at morn, and when the shades  
 Of drizzy eve prevail by instinct fades.

One, and but one poor solitary cave,  
 Too sparing of her favours Nature gave ;  
 That one alone (hard tax on Scottish pride !)  
 Shelter at once for man and beast supplied.  
 There snares without entangling briers spread,  
 And thistles, arm'd against th' invader's head,  
 Stood in close ranks all entrance to oppose,  
 Thistles now held more precious than the rose.  
 All creatures which on Nature's earliest plan,  
 Were form'd to loathe and to be loathed by man,  
 Which owed their birth to nastiness and spite,  
 Deadly to touch and hateful to the sight,  
 Creatures which, when admitted to the ark,  
 Their Saviour shunn'd and rankled in the dark,  
 Found place within : marking her noisome road  
 With poison's trail here crawl'd the bloated toad ;  
 There webs were spread of more than common size,  
 And half-starved spiders preyed on half-starved flies ;

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<sup>1</sup> The white rose was the Jacobite emblem, the 10th of June the birthday of Charles Edward.

In quest of food efts strove in vain to crawl ;  
Slugs pinch'd with hunger smear'd the slimy wall ;  
The cave around with hissing serpents rung ;  
On the damp roof unhealthy vapour hung ;  
And famine by her children always known,  
As proud as poor, here fix'd her native throne.

In all the range of English satirical poetry, it may be doubted if there is anything finer than these lines. Their consummate ease, their wit, their admirable rhetorical flow, and their exquisite amplification of detail, combine to give them a character which many poets of greater rank might envy. It is no matter for surprise that such a work should have caught the taste of the town at once, and should have brought in a rich harvest to the author. A curious anecdote of this period is told by Dr. Kippis, of Churchill having in the exuberance of delight at his success, dressed his younger son in a Scotch plaid like a Highlander, and carried him everywhere in that garb. “The boy,” says Kippis, “being asked by a gentleman, with whom I was in company, why he was clothed in such a manner, answered, with great vivacity, ‘Sir, my father hates the Scotch, and does it to plague them.’”

The other side had a champion as powerful as Churchill, but in a different line. The language of art is learned, however, as readily as that of literature, especially that of satirical art. Hogarth had not been idle in the cause of his party. In the preceding September he had published his first print of “The Times”—a rather scurrilous caricature aimed at Lord Temple, Pitt, and the other chiefs of the Whig party. The *North Briton* retaliated in its seventeenth number—probably by the hand of Churchill. Hogarth treasured his resentment for a while, but at

last found means to vent it. The famous number forty-five of the *North Briton* contained a violent attack on the ministry of April, 1763, which, to say the truth, was composed of men personally and politically infamous. For the publication of this libel Wilkes was brought to trial, and, while pleading his cause, Hogarth made the sketch for that famous caricature of the "squinting demagogue" which we all know so well. This attack on the person of his friend exasperated Churchill beyond all bounds, and he accordingly devoted himself to the production of a reply to the painter in *his* manner. Very soon after the publication of the print he brought out an "Epistle to William Hogarth," with the motto "*Ut pictura poesis*,—a motto which the work fully carried out. It is deservedly placed by all the readers of Churchill next to the "Prophecy of Famine" in order of merit. Not merely satirical, it is distinguished also by some of the highest qualities of poetry. The author pays a noble and touching tribute to the merits and genius of Hogarth though he is bitter and sarcastic enough on his political opinions and social faults. All the painter's little vanities, his belief in his power of painting historical pictures, his picture of Sigismunda, and his own opinion of the merits of that famous work, are touched upon sharply enough; but the poet fully concedes the claims of Hogarth's genius, even whilst denying his personal right to consideration on account of his "envy, pride, and spleen":—

Truly let him wear  
The wreath which Genius wove and planted there ;  
Foe as I am, should Envy bear it down,  
Myself would labour to replace the crown.

In walks of humour in that cast of style,  
Which probing to the quick yet makes us smile ;

In Comedy, his natural road to Fame,  
Nor let me call it by a meaner name,  
Where a beginning, middle, and an end,  
Are aptly join'd, and parts on parts depend,  
Each made for each, as bodies for their soul,  
So as to form one true and perfect whole ;  
Where a plain story to the eye is told,  
Which we conceive the moment we behold :  
Hogarth unrivall'd stands and shall engage  
Unrival'd praise to the most distant age.

Hogarth was bitterly sensible to the satire, but indifferent to the praise with which it was softened. He did not, however, trust himself to make any other reply than by issuing a print of a bear holding a pot of beer in one paw, and hugging a cudgel with the other, and bearing the title, “The Bruiser, C. Churchill (*once the Reverend*), in the character of a Russian Bear regaling himself after having slain the monster Caracatura that so sorely galled his Virtuous Friend, the heaven-born Wilkes.” Churchill was enraged enough at this, and meditated retaliation by the publication of an elegy on Hogarth, treating the painter as if he were already dead. He wisely refrained, however, and gave as a reason that he was dissuaded by the “woman whom he loved.”

His connexion with this woman is one of the darkest blots on his by no means stainless character. Southey, in his life of Cowper, has told the melancholy story how Churchill seduced this girl, who was the daughter of a respectable sculptor of Westminster. She left her home, but conscience permitted her no rest, and she returned to it in a fortnight. Here she would have remained, but the austere virtue of her sister interfered with the kind intentions of her father. By constant taunts and reproaches she made the

house utterly unbearable to the poor girl, who, driven out and without a refuge, fled again to Churchill. He took her in and cherished her—she never left him until they were separated by death. His conscience did not, however, slumber. In the poem of the “Conference,” which was designed as a vindication of himself against the virulent criticism with which he was constantly assailed by the hirelings of Bute, he professes that, though he is unaffected by the babbling of a busy world, he is “moved by the tale which angry conscience tells.” The whole passage is sufficiently characteristic of Churchill as a poet and as a moralist, to deserve quotation :—

Ah ! what, my Lord, hath private life to do  
 With things of public nature ? why to view  
 Would you thus cruelly those scenes unfold  
 Which, without pain and horror to behold,  
 Must speak me something more or less than man,  
 Which friends may pardon, but I never can !  
 Look back ! a thought which borders on despair,  
 Which human nature must, but cannot, bear.  
 'Tis not the babbling of a busy world,  
 Where praise and censure are at random hurl'd,  
 Which can the meanest of my thoughts control,  
 Or shake one settled purpose of my soul.  
 Free and at large might their wild courses roam  
 If all, if all, alas ! were well at home.  
 No, 'tis the tale which angry Conscience tells  
 When she with more than tragic horror swells  
 Each circumstance of guilt ; when stern, but true,  
 She brings bad actions forth into review ;  
 And, like the dread handwriting on the wall,  
 Bids late remorse awake at reason's call,  
 Arm'd at all points bids scorpion vengeance pass,  
 And to the mind holds up reflection's glass,  
 The mind which starting heaves the heartfelt groan,  
 And hates that form she knows to be her own.  
 Enough of this. Let private sorrows rest ;  
 As to the public I dare stand the test :

Dare proudly boast, I feel no wish above  
The good of England and my country's love.

The patriotism of the last lines is perhaps a little out of fashion, but the power of the whole passage is indisputable, while the courageous confession of error and sin takes from vice more than half its evil. In this respect the poem is especially characteristic. Whatever Churchill's faults and failings may have been—and unfortunately, in a singularly profligate and depraved age he had but too fair a share of both—he was always manly and always genuinely English. He sinned and sinned grossly from excess of that conscious power which breathes in every line of his writings, but he never glossed over his offences, never called evil good and good evil, never pretended that what would be vice in other men was mere frailty in him. He has paid the penalty of his candour. During his life his notorious breach of conjugal duty was a constant topic of reproach amongst the moral and political purists whom he attacked, and the shadow of that reproach has since darkened his poetical fame. Yet against condemnation of this kind he left on record a most earnest protest. In the "Farewell"—one of the last of his poems—he begs that his life may not be written either by his friends or by his foes, either by little men or great,—

Let no false, sneaking Peer  
(Some such there are), to win the public ear,  
Hand me to shame with some vile anecdote,  
Nor soul-gall'd Bishop damn me with a note.\*  
Let one poor sprig of bay around my head  
Bloom whilst I live, and point me out when dead.

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\* The allusion is of course to Warburton and his edition of Pope.

Let it (may Heaven indulgent grant that prayer)  
Be planted on my grave, nor wither there ;  
And when on travel bound, some rhyming guest  
Roams through the churchyard whilst his dinner's drest,  
Let it hold up this comment to his eyes,  
“ Life to the last enjoyed—here Churchill lies ;”  
Whilst, oh what joy that pleasing flattery gives,  
Reading my works he cries, “ Here Churchill lives.”

It was unfortunate for Churchill's fame that his aspirations in this matter were left unregarded. He was hardly cold in his grave when a catch-penny biography was published, concerning which Cowper wrote, “ The pitiful scribbler of his life seems to have undertaken that task for which he was entirely unqualified, merely because it afforded an opportunity to traduce him.”

Almost immediately after the publication of the “Candidate,” the prosecution against Wilkes for the publication of his “Essay on Woman” was commenced, and a warrant was issued for his arrest. To escape it he fled to France, whence he wrote urging Churchill to join him, in order that they might from that safe asylum continue their common attack upon the dominant party in England. The scheme dropped into abeyance for various reasons, and the poet remained at home superintending the publication of that poem of “The Duellist,” which Walpole considered the finest and most severe of his works. Though it is undoubtedly a noble monument to the fame of the writer, readers of the nineteenth century will scarcely agree with the critic of Strawberry Hill. To them its fame is eclipsed by Churchill's next production, “The Author,” which appeared towards the close of the year. This was more personal in its tone than any other of Churchill's works, except the “Farewell,” the last he ever wrote. It was, too, rather less exuberant in style

than was usual with the writer, and not only won a warm reception from the public, but even gained a recognition of its merits from the critics, who were never very easy to be pleased with anything by Churchill. It was followed by "Gotham," which is less satirical and far more poetical than any other of his writings. It presents the lofty ideal which he had formed of a patriot-king. With all its carelessness—and it has many faults arising therefrom—it is a noble work, and well deserves the high praise which Cowper has bestowed upon it. "'Gotham,' unless I am a greater blockhead than he," (Churchill's biographer, who had stigmatized it as a "catch-penny"), "which I am far from believing, is a noble and beautiful poem, and a poem with which, I make no doubt, the author took as much pains as with any he ever wrote. Making allowance, (and Dryden, in his 'Absalom and Achitophel,' stands in need of the same indulgence) for an unwarrantable use of Scripture, it appears to me to be a masterly performance. . . . He is, indeed, a careless writer for the most part, but where shall we find in any of those authors who finish their works with the exactness of a Flemish pencil, those bold and daring strokes of fancy, those numbers so hazardously ventured upon and so happily finished, the matter so compressed and yet so clear, and the colouring so sparingly laid on, and yet with such a beautiful effect? In short, it is not his least praise that he is never guilty of those faults as a writer which he lays to the charge of others—a proof that he did not judge by a borrowed standard or from rules laid down by critics, but that he was qualified to do it by his own native powers, and his great superiority of genius." Unfortunately, "Gotham" was not so successful with the public as the more personal works,

and added little but reputation to its author at the time of its publication.

Shortly before the appearance of these two poems Churchill removed from Richmond to a house on Acton Common. The scribblers who filled the magazines after his death with apocryphal stories of his weaknesses and crimes, have told marvellous tales of the luxury and splendour of his household, of his "post-chaise, saddle-horses, and pointers," of his passing his time in "fishing, hunting, and coursing,"—stories which some of his later critics have diligently repeated, but to which there does not appear the smallest ground for attaching credence. It is quite true that he was greedy of gain, and that he bartered too readily future fame for present cash. He had, however, a family dependent upon him, and it is easy to understand his anxiety to make a fitting provision for them. To that anxiety is probably due his reckless habit of putting forth a hasty and careless work immediately after a successful one, rather than to any wanton extravagance in his personal habits.

"The Candidate," already alluded to, was his last opportunity for personal satire. Three other poems followed—"The Farewell," "The Times," and "Independence,"—each worthy of attention in its way; but the second, from the ghastly nature of its subject, is hardly fit for "family reading." "Independence"—the last of his poems published in his lifetime—is remarkable as containing a portrait of himself, which is to the full as satirical as anything which Churchill wrote of another. No one but a good-natured man, and one full of humour, could have written of himself in terms like these,—

Broad were his shoulders, and from blade to blade,  
A H—— might at full length have laid ;  
Vast were his bones, his muscles twisted strong,  
His face was short, but broader than 'twas long,  
His features, though by nature they were large,  
Contentment had contrived to overcharge,  
And bury meaning, save that we might spy  
Sense hovering on the penthouse of his eye ;  
His arms were two twin oaks ; his legs so stout,  
That they might bear a mansion-house about ;  
Nor were they, look but at his body there,  
Design'd by Fate a much less weight to bear.

O'er a brown cassock, which had once been black,  
And hung in tatters on his brawny back,  
A sight most strange and awkward to behold,  
He threw a covering of *blue* and *gold*.  
Just at that time of life when man, by rule,  
The fop lays down, takes up the graver fool,  
He started up a fop, and, fond of show,  
Look'd like another Hercules turn'd beau.  
A subject met with only now and then,  
Much fitter for the pencil than the pen ;  
Hogarth would draw him (*Envy must allow*)  
E'en to the life, were Hogarth living now.

It is, it may be remarked in passing, curious to note that in one of the many forgotten satires which the success of the “Rosciad,” provoked, he is described as,—

“In blue and gold now strutting like a peer.”

Amongst his papers after his death was found a touching fragment, headed “The Journey.” In writing this he appears to have had a prescience of his approaching end. He begs his friends to—

Read some three hundred lines, no easy task,  
But probably the last that I shall ask ;”

exhorts the Muses to feed their appetite for laughter

with the smaller wits and verse-taggers of the day ; and concludes with the prophetic line,—

I on my journey all alone proceed.

The journey he was about to take was to visit Wilkes in Paris ; but his design was rudely broken by the hand of death. He left London in company with Humphrey Cotes and a person named Goy on the 22nd of October, 1764. Travelling leisurely, he did not reach Boulogne until a week after, and there he was seized with a miliary fever. Medical aid was at once called in, but before it reached him he was already beyond its power. In the awful presence of death he remained calm, and sitting up in his bed, he dictated a just and equitable will. To his wife he left a reasonable provision from the profits of his life of labour, and to the girl who owed her ruin to him he bequeathed an annuity. His friends had mourning rings left to them, and Wilkes was requested to collect and publish his works. He was urgent in his desire to be carried to England, that he might die in the land he loved so well, and to which he had given his best labour. Preparations were accordingly made for his removal, but before it could be effected he breathed his last. He died on the 4th of November, and his body was carried to England for interment. Four short years of toil, excitement, and dissipation had sufficed to “fret his body to decay.”

The hirelings of the ministry exulted meanly over his death, and vied with each other in the falsehoods they heaped over his grave. Others strove to make capital out of even his death-bed. According to some he died raving about political matters, and exclaiming with his last breath, “ Oh, my unhappy country ! ”

Others have given his last words as, “What a fool I have been!” The two stories are about equally improbable: with his self-contained and reticent nature he was hardly likely to have broken out into unavailing lamentations even in his last hours; while the whole tenor of his writings inclines one to believe that the seeds of good were never so far eradicated from his nature as to allow of his turning his thoughts at that solemn moment from the awful journey he was about to enter upon. We may, indeed, in spite of Mr. Gilfillan, who accepts, on the doubtful authority of Davies the actor, the “What a fool I have been!” safely dismiss these idle tales to the limbo to which the rest of those that disfigure his memory have been consigned.

His tomb in the churchyard of St. Martin, at Dover, bears a modest epitaph, taken from the passage of “The Candidate,” already quoted, expressing a hope that the reader of his works will say that in them he still lives. If he does, it is not through the care of his friend Wilkes, who did no more towards carrying out the dying bequest of the poet than burning his scrap-book and pestering his friends for his letters. He set up a Doric urn, it is true, in the garden of his villa in the Isle of Wight, with a flaming Latin inscription to the memory of Churchill. The “storied urn” has, however, been outlived by some fine lines in “Table Talk,” where Cowper has nobly repaid the debt of his schoolboy days, and has vindicated the fame of the “last of the satirists.” The poet, by the way, in a letter written to Mr. Unwin in 1786, in which he warmly praises the dead satirist, makes a suggestion which might have been worthy of attention. “It is,” he says, “an affair of very little consequence perhaps to

the well-being of mankind, but I cannot help regretting that he died so soon. The words of Virgil upon the immature death of Marcellus might serve for his epitaph,—

‘Ostendit terris hunc tantum fata, neque ultra  
Esse sinent.’”

Of the moral failings of Churchill we have scarcely a right to speak. Even supposing, however, that we had such a right, so much dirt has been already flung that few will care to soil their hands with more, while the enthusiastic affection with which he was regarded by his sister and his friend Lloyd, both of whom died of grief on hearing of his death, proves that he must have possessed some very admirable qualities. Concerning his influence on literature there need be no such reticence. If he himself were not perfect, he always respected the chastity of his Muse. No scurrilous or licentious lampoons proceeded from his pen. He never lost his independence, never flattered meanness because it was in power, never abused the weak because they were such. He was implacable against wickedness and baseness, whether the person in whom he found those qualities were high or low, rich or poor. But though no respecter of persons, he always preferred to fly at the highest game. Had he to choose between a lord and a lackey, the former would certainly become the mark for satire. In a word, he was thoroughly independent—the embodiment of the ideal John Bull—in his courage and contempt for outward distinctions, as well as in the bluffness and weight of his attacks. It is true that he dealt too much in invective, and was not sufficiently particular in the choice of his weapon so long as he knocked down his

adversary, acting apparently on the theory that “any stick is good enough to beat a dog.” If it be considered, however, who and what those adversaries were, Churchill can hardly be blamed for dipping his pen in gall. He could extend no mercy to a Sandwich, who, having been one of the monks of Medmenham, and a partaker with Wilkes in the vilest orgies of that place, and having been expelled the Beefsteak Club for blasphemy, chose to set himself up as a censor of the morals of his political adversaries—or to a Warburton, who, professing to be a Christian bishop, was in practice a Deist at the best—or to a Ligonier, to whose nameless crimes even Churchill could only allude in the most distant manner. Against such men as these he felt that a light weapon was useless—the heaviest broadsword in his armoury was not too terrible a weapon. For the vigorous and masculine diction in which he clothed his thoughts it is impossible to be too grateful. He, more than any other writer, restored the English school of poetry from the low estate into which it was falling, through a too ready and universal acceptance of the manner of Pope. He worked upon the broad lines which Dryden had laid down, and to him, in conjunction with Cowper, we owe without doubt the restoration of that natural school of poetry which is at the present day the glory of England.

## DAVID GARRICK.

THERE are few professions of which the glory is more evanescent than that of the actor. So much indeed of the actor's success depends upon details and circumstances that perish in the using, that unless he is distinguished in some other way than by his public appearances, he becomes very speedily the mere shadow of a name. The indescribable and unteachable charms of look, voice, and manner, that hold his audience enthralled, die with his final exit, or at best live in the memories of a few devout and enthusiastic playgoers. As they in turn die off and the actor passes out of living memory we have only some vague tradition to fall back upon, and the tradition of how one man spoke the words of another, or of the action by which he illustrated them, is hardly likely to be very distinct or very accurate. But when, as is sometimes the case, the actor adds to his professional celebrity such reputation as is to be gained from an acquaintance with the men of genius and of intellectual rank in his days, when he is himself a man of education and of no mean literary attainments, when by his efforts the character and condition of the stage are materially elevated, when he is distinguished not less by his success in his profession than by his general conduct and sense, he becomes a worthy object of interest and consideration. Such an actor was David Garrick. The intimate friend and companion of Johnson, Burke, Reynolds, and

Goldsmith ; the author or adapter of more than forty dramatic pieces, besides odes, prologues, and occasional verses innumerable ; the manager under whose judicious direction the stage was purged from many of its most crying abuses, and by whose liberality and discrimination many rising men of ability were discovered and rewarded ; the actor whose intellectual power and capacity abolished the traditional mannerisms of the stage and substituted for a drawling and sing-song recitation an elocution of surprising naturalness and truth ; the restorer of Shakespeare in his integrity to those boards from which he had long been virtually banished—a man distinguished alike in his private and in his public capacities—irreproachable in his domestic relations, and dying with scarcely an enemy in the world, Garrick forms one of the most conspicuous figures of the last century, and certainly no improper or uninteresting subject of study in the present.

The revocation of the Edict of Nantes brought to this country somewhere about half-a-million of worthy personages, refugees from the intolerance of Madame de Maintenon and the Grand Monarque, over whom she ruled. Among the rest came one De la Garrique, whose flight was shared by his wife and infant son. In course of time the little fellow grew to manhood and became an officer in the English army, in what capacity no one seems to know. Murphy, indeed, states that he received a captain's commission ; but Murphy is so notoriously inaccurate that it may probably be taken for granted that he obtained no more than a “ pair of colours,” and was not attached to any regiment. As usual, however, the ensign was dubbed “ Captain ” by his friends, and a Captain Peter Garrick remained to the end of the chapter. A recruiting lieutenant—which

seems to have been the worthy man's real rank—was nothing very exalted. Such as it was, however, the red coat and the warm heart beneath it fascinated one Arabella Clough, the pretty daughter of one of the Vicars Choral of Lichfield, where Peter Garrick was quartered at the beginning of the century.

The fair Arabella quitted her father's roof in 1707 to follow her husband's fortunes. These were naturally unsettled enough. Duty constantly took the captain from one place to another, the result being that the family were at Hereford when the second son and third child, David, came into the world on the 19th of February, 1716. Captain Garrick, who appears to have been a remarkably simple-minded and kind-hearted man, retired from the army soon after this interesting event, and settled in Lichfield, where his sprightly boy speedily became a favourite with all classes. The registrar of the cathedral, Johnson's friend and patron, Gilbert Walmesley, took notice of him, and the clergy appear to have been attracted by his lively manners and sweet temper. In process of time he was sent to the Free Grammar School of Lichfield, then under the charge of a Mr. Hunter, where he received the greater part of his education. A good deal of nonsense has been written concerning his carelessness and inattention to the studies of the school; but the tales of Davies and Murphy must be accepted with caution. In this matter they are self-condemned for two reasons. In the first place, David Garrick possessed, by Johnson's testimony, a more than average amount of classical knowledge, and in the second, Hunter was one of the race of flogging school-masters, who were unquestionably brutes, but who contrived to turn out some very respectable scholars.

Little Davy's weakness was not, in fact, idleness, but a too great vivacity, which displayed itself in a curious aptitude for caricaturing the oddities and eccentricities of the Lichfield people, which, as Lichfield was the most provincial of English country towns, were numerous enough. Strangely enough, this habit of his made him more friends than enemies, and even served upon occasion to propitiate the ferocious Hunter.

The players did not visit Lichfield very frequently in the days of Garrick's boyhood, and when they did their performances were not of miraculous excellence. Hogarth's picture of "strollers in a barn" seems to have been fairly representative of the companies who wandered over England in the early years of the last century. Such as they were, however, their visit somewhere about the year 1727 seems to have been the turning-point in Garrick's life. The boy bloomed out into actor and manager, raising a theatrical company amongst his schoolfellows in imitation of the strollers, drilling them indefatigably, and working himself to the best of his ability. When all things else were ready, Garrick applied to one Mr. Samuel Johnson, the son of a bookseller in the town, who had already acquired a certain amount of reputation for the dexterity with which he handled his pen, to provide the company with a prologue. Mr. Johnson declined to furnish the necessary verses—why we are not told—and the play was presented in its unadorned simplicity. It was Farquhar's "Recruiting Officer," and with an odd perversity Garrick assumed the part of Serjeant Kite.

Garrick had scarcely entered upon his teens, when an uncle, who was a wealthy and prosperous wine merchant in Lisbon, proposed to his father to take

him into his house and "make a man of him." The boy was accordingly despatched, and found his uncle all that he had been led to expect. But he did not stay long at Lisbon. He was not made for a man of business, and the monotony of the counting-house depressed him. It is true, indeed, that he found other occupations, and that some of the younger members of the Portuguese aristocracy treated him with great kindness and friendship ; but it is not surprising to find that before a year was over he became home-sick, and returned to Lichfield, where his father very wisely placed him once more under the care of Mr. Hunter. Before long the affairs of the family began to wear a very gloomy aspect. The captain's half-pay was insufficient to support his large family, and debts were accumulating on every hand. Under this pressure he gladly took service again, and leaving his family in Lichfield, made his way to Gibraltar, where he served for some years, little David being, during this period, the mainstay of the family at home.

At this time Johnson was fighting the battle of life against penury and misfortune with but indifferent success. The bookseller's son had tried various ways of getting a living, but he had not been particularly fortunate in any of them. He had been an usher in several schools, where he lived a life of such drudgery and physical misery that in after-days he could not refer to this period without the strongest and deepest emotion. Now still possessed with the idea of maintaining himself by teaching, and inspired by the counsels of his excellent friend, Gilbert Walmesley, he opened a school at Edial. An advertisement in the "Gentleman's Magazine" set forth that "At Edial, near Lichfield, young gentlemen are boarded and taught

the Latin and Greek languages, by Samuel Johnson." David Garrick was taken from the grammar school and placed under Johnson's care, and he and his brother George, with four or five boys from the neighbourhood, amongst whom was Hawkesworth, afterwards the compiler of *travels*, were all the pupils Johnson ever had. The relations between the two men were somewhat curious. Johnson was Garrick's senior by only a very few years, and the lively lad not unnaturally turned his tutor's peculiarities into ridicule even whilst estimating his innumerable good qualities at their due value. Johnson, on his side, appears to have treated Garrick with a sternness and severity which had their due effect on the intercourse of after-life. Not content with the dull routine of scholastic life, Johnson was at this time engaged upon his tragedy of "Irene"—that pompous, stilted, unpoetical, undramatic, and unreadable piece, which in after-years Garrick, apparently out of pure gratitude and affection for its author, produced at Drury Lane.

The Edial school had lasted for a year, when Johnson, stimulated by the applause of Gilbert Walmesley, set out for London, with the three acts of his tragedy in his pocket, and having Garrick for his companion. There had been some consultation as to ways and means, as was not unnecessary, seeing that Johnson in after-life was wont to speak of the time when he entered London "with twopence halfpenny in his pocket," Garrick having but three halfpence in his. On the whole, however, one is tempted to believe that this story was one of those pardonable exaggerations in which men who have risen to a position of comfort from comparative poverty are very apt to indulge. Garrick certainly could not have been so destitute as he is

represented, seeing that within a week of his arrival in London—on the 9th of March, 1737—he was entered of Lincoln's Inn. Walmesley had recommended him strongly to a friend at Rochester—a worthy clergyman named Colson—under whom he might study philosophy and mathematics, “while,” said Walmesley, “in the intervals of study he will be an agreeable companion.” Desirable on every account though the plan was, the narrow finances of the ex-captain were insufficient to supply the funds for carrying it into effect. At this moment with dramatic appropriateness the wealthy uncle from Lisbon made his appearance. Garrick, of course, explained matters, and succeeded in so confirming the favourable impression he had produced when on his visit to Lisbon, that not merely did his uncle minister to his immediate necessities, but put his name down in his will for a larger legacy than he had bequeathed to any of his nephews and nieces. The old man had intended to settle in England, but death was beforehand with him, and in a few weeks Garrick had lost his uncle and become the possessor of no less a sum than a thousand pounds. Very wisely he at once placed himself under Colson's care, with whom he stayed for some months.

While David was thus occupying himself with his education, Captain Garrick, who had exchanged with an officer on full pay at Gibraltar, returned to England with, it is said, the brevet rank of major. He found his health completely shattered with advancing years and foreign service, and sent in his papers in order that he might sell his commission. The author of the memoir prefixed to his correspondence asserts that permission to carry out this arrangement was refused by the authorities; but so far from that being the case

negotiations had been entered into, and the sale would have been effected for a sum of 1100*l.*, had not death carried him off. His will contains the remarkable bequest of "one shilling" only to his son David—a fact which would be inexplicable, considering the warm affection which always subsisted between them, were it not for the ample provision which the uncle had made. Before twelve months were over the tender mother and faithful wife followed Captain Garrick to the grave; and David, who now saw that his chances of succeeding at the bar were of the slenderest description, returned to London and established himself in business with his brother Peter. Foote, between whom and Garrick there was a warm though not unfriendly rivalry, never forgot this episode in his friend's career. In after-days he would say to his friends that he "remembered Garrick living in Durham Yard with three quarts of vinegar in his cellar, and calling himself a wine merchant." Trade, however, whether under the guidance of his uncle at Lisbon, or of a brother six years his senior in London, was not to David's taste. His was a nature which, in spite of considerable prudence and sagacity in its own way, was too lively and volatile to endure confinement to the desk's dull wood, while his brother was a rather slow, formal and dull man of business. The result of such a connexion may readily be guessed. The business of the firm lay chiefly amongst coffee-houses and taverns frequented by persons connected with the theatres, and amongst them David was often to be found—too often, indeed, for the satisfaction of his plodding brother. Endless bickerings arose between them in consequence. The business ceased to be profitable; friends interfered, and the partnership was dissolved.

Thus freed from the trammels of commerce, Garrick turned to his natural element—the stage. He had made friends with many actors, and had established a connexion with Drury Lane, where Fleetwood, the manager, produced his first dramatic work—a curious and original poetical sketch—called “*Lethe*,” the point of which lay in the meeting of various characters on the other side of the Styx. It was as an actor, however, rather than as a dramatic author, that Garrick felt he would shine, and he consulted accordingly with his friends as to the best means of gratifying his ambition. Giffard, the manager of the theatre in Goodman’s Fields, gave him most sensible advice. He recommended him to begin in the provinces, and to learn the technical part of his profession before asking for the verdict of a critical London audience. Garrick was wise enough to appreciate the wisdom of the recommendation, and set out for Ipswich armed with a letter of introduction to the manager of the theatre there, who was a relation of Giffard, and who bore the same name. His terms were accepted, and under the name of Lyddal, Garrick made “his first appearance on any stage,” in the character of Aboan, in Dryden’s long-forgotten tragedy of “*Oroonoko*.<sup>1</sup>”

There was, it is possible, some meaning in the choice of this part—diffident of his power, the young actor was, without doubt, anxious to provide against the chance of recognition by his friends, and so chose a character wherein his disguise was most perfect. There was, however, no need for disguise. The Ipswich people received him with rapturous applause, and flocked in crowds to see him, both in Aboan and in the new part of Chamont in “*The Orphan*,” which he undertook a few days later. Encouraged by his

manifest success in tragedy, he speedily essayed the versatility of his powers, and appeared in the course of a few weeks as Captain Brazen in Farquhar's gay comedy of the "Recruiting Officer," and as Sir Harry Wildair in the comedy of the same name—the latter being the part which is generally associated with the name of the lovely Mrs. Woffington. He won as much applause in comedy as in tragedy; and then, as though he wished to prove that nothing is too low for genius to stoop to, he condescended to play even harlequin.

Success had attended him in whatever he attempted. But Garrick cared little for petty triumphs, and, with the winter season, returned to London. The managers of the patent theatres would, however, have nothing to do with him as yet, and finding them obdurate, he turned once more to his friend Giffard, the manager of what was then called "the little theatre" in Goodman's Fields. Here the law restricting the number of theatres was evaded by the device of presenting a "concert of music," between the parts of which a play and a farce were performed by some persons "for their own diversion." Giffard closed with Garrick's offer at once, and entered upon an agreement by which he engaged him at a salary of five pounds a week. The sum sounds small enough in these days, but it was large for the early part of the eighteenth century and proves, with tolerable clearness, the high estimation in which the services of the young actor were held. He chose the part of Richard the Third for his first appearance on the London stage, and in the play-bill of the Goodman's Fields Theatre for the 19th of October, 1741, a copy of which is still in existence, we find announced, "The part of King Richard, by A GENTLEMAN (who never appeared on any stage);"

thus suppressing alike his real name and his *début* at Ipswich. He needed, however, neither concealments nor disguises. His first appearance was a triumphant success. The truth, simplicity and naturalness of the new actor as distinguished from the cold and stilted rant which passed current in those days for tragedy, completely took the town by storm. His fame spread rapidly westward, and the fashionable world was speedily drawn from its favourite haunts to the little East End Theatre. "The road from Westminster to Whitechapel," says a contemporary, "was covered with carriages in a constant stream; and Goodman's Fields was full of the splendour of St. James's and Grosvenor Square." "Did I tell you," says Gray in one of his letters, "about Mr. Garrick, that the town are horn-mad after? There are a dozen dukes of a night at Goodman's Fields sometimes;" and Horace Walpole, though he does not fall in with the general opinion, cannot resist the fact of Garrick's popularity. In a letter to Sir Horace Mann he says, "All the run is now after Garrick, a wine merchant who is turned player at Goodman's Fields. He plays all parts, and is a very good mimic. His acting I have seen, and may say to you, who will not tell it again here, I see nothing wonderful in it: but it is heresy to say so: the Duke of Argyll says he is superior to Betterton." Pope, too, then very near his end, broke through his rule of abstaining from visits to the theatre, and came to see the young actor in those days. He is said to have told Lord Orrery, when he had been induced to emerge from his retirement, that "he was afraid the young man would be spoiled, for he would have no competitor." Giffard could not fail to see the value of his friend, and that the sum which he paid him was

altogether inadequate. He yielded, therefore to the representations of certain good-natured intercessors, and entered into a new arrangement by which Garrick was to receive half the net profits of the theatre. The terms sound very liberal, but the profit to the actor does not appear to have been overwhelming. Davies, indeed, mentions that the gross receipts of the Goodman's Fields house for seven nights were but 216*l.* 7*s.*; and when salaries, rent and expenses were deducted from that sum, the share of the partners would not be extravagant.

Other characters were speedily added to that of Richard—characters varying from the most exalted tragedy down to farce and the lowest of low comedy. He appeared again as Chamant in the “Orphan;” in his own farce of the “Lying Valet”—a piece which retained its popularity for half a century—as the Ghost in “Hamlet;” as Fondlewife in the “Old Bachelor,” and as Master Johnny in Colley Cibber’s farce of the “Schoolboy,” on which last occasion the unvenerable veteran, who was then in his eighty-fourth year, graciously remarked to Mrs. Bracegirdle, “Why, faith, Bracey, the young fellow is clever.” His greatest achievement was, however, his interpretation of Lear. Murphy tells a tale of his having studied the manifestations of insanity in an unfortunate gentleman of his acquaintance, who accidentally dropped his grandchild whilst playing with it at a window, into the flagged area below. The fall instantly killed the child, and the unfortunate grandfather suffered ever afterwards from acute mania. Whether the story be true or not—and Murphy is, to say the least, a most untrustworthy authority—the fact remains that Lear was, from the first, one of the finest of Garrick’s parts. Several

years afterwards, when he was in Paris, he represented the whole scene before Clairon with extraordinary success. Melted to tears, the great French actress threw herself into his arms, and embraced him with rapture.

The season at Goodman's Fields had begun on the 19th of October, 1741, and lasted until the 23rd of May, 1742, between which dates Garrick acted on one hundred and fifty-nine nights in eighteen characters. On three nights after the latter date, he played at Drury Lane, as Bayes in the "Rehearsal," Lear, and Richard. He divided the profits with Fleetwood the manager, and immediately afterwards set off for Dublin, in company with Woffington, his relations with whom were of the friendliest kind—if indeed they did not deserve a warmer title. It is, perhaps, hardly necessary to say that Garrick's popularity followed him to the Irish capital. His admirers were wont to relate that he was the occasion of an epidemic there, so that the phrase "Garrick fever" was no mere metaphor. The fact was that the summer was extremely hot and Dublin has always been one of the dirtiest of cities, to which combined circumstances may be traced the appearance of a low type of fever which appears to have attacked many of the frequenters of the theatre. Here Garrick introduced Hamlet with general applause. The Irish appear, however, from some letters in the "Correspondence," to have taken some objection to the actor's pronunciation of English. Like the rest of his contemporaries, he in plain words minced the king's English in a fashion which would now be thought infamously affected. Thus for example he talked of wind, obleege, Horetio, metron Iserel, villin, appäl (for appeal), and so forth. But



for his general capacity there was nothing save the warmest applause.

On his return from Dublin, Garrick found the way clear before him for an engagement at Drury Lane. The managers of the patent theatres had succeeded in inducing Sir John Barnard, one of the magistrates for the city, to put such pressure on Giffard that he closed the theatre in Goodman's Fields, and made overtures to Fleetwood, who then held the patent for Drury Lane. Garrick was invited by the same manager, and joined his company at a salary of 500*l.* a year, which, however, was paid with undeviating irregularity. Fleetwood had been a man of large fortune and of corresponding fashion, and in his lower estate as manager he preserved all his extravagant tastes, especially that for high play and general extravagance, the result being that he was constantly in difficulties, and was accustomed to relieve his necessities at the expense of his company. Garrick's means were, happily, sufficient to enable him to live comfortably in spite of his temporary embarrassments, and accordingly we find him at this time joining company in a house in Russell Street, Covent Garden, with Mrs. Woffington and Macklin. The arrangement was that "each should keep house for a month turn and turn about," and it is not surprising that under such circumstances quarrels should have broken out. Mrs. Woffington was by nature profuse; Garrick on the other hand was careful and prudent; and Macklin, while neither one nor the other, was of a malignant temper. When after a quarrel about theatrical matters he was anxious to depreciate his former friend, he propagated a number of idle tales of this period in the

great actor's life, to which may be traced the generally existing impression of his excessive penuriousness.

At Drury Lane Garrick repeated his performance of Bayes in the farce of the "Rehearsal." This part, from which Sheridan obtained the idea of Sir Fretful Plagiary in the immortal "Critic," had always been a favourite with those actors who combine a talent for mimicry with a natural humour of their own. The wit of the original play lies chiefly in its ridicule of the extravagances of the heroic school of rhymed tragedy, of which Dryden is the acknowledged head. Later versions—for it was always treated as a peg on which to hang any satire suited to the passing moment—superadded a theatrical element to the literary and the burlesque, confined no longer to the language of the stage, by degrees extended itself to the manners of the actors. It is obvious that this was treading upon rather dangerous ground. Actors are not the most pachydermatous of their race, and hence quarrels were pretty frequent. Garrick did not, however, deviate from his usual practice through fear of the consequences, and whilst rehearsing took the usual licence with several of his contemporaries. Some good-natured friend informed Quin that he had been chosen as one of the principal victims, to which information he replied with a defiant allusion to a thick stick. Others were less tender of their reputations, and the rehearsals continued. One unfortunate accident, however, delayed the reproduction of the piece for a fortnight. Garrick mentioned to his friend Giffard that as he meant to caricature the other actors in the theatre, he must not expect to be spared. No objection was offered at the outset, but in his very first scene Garrick made his mimicry so

utterly ridiculous, that the ex-manager flew into a violent rage, and sent his tormentor a challenge, which Garrick, nothing loth, accepted. In the duel which followed, Giffard was wounded in the shoulder—not seriously, but sufficiently so to lay him up for a couple of weeks, and to delay the production of the play. When at last it made its appearance, the imitation of Giffard was, of course, suppressed. With the public it was remarkably successful, they regarding the play as a masterpiece of humour, and Garrick as the best enactor of the part. Some of the actors not altogether unnaturally did not share in this view, and Colley Cibber, who was always jealous of Garrick, used to say that he was no better in the part than his son Theophilus—that “The’ Cibber,” whom everybody declared born to be hanged, and who certainly deserved the fate half-a-dozen times over, but was drowned after all. Cibber’s jealousy, indeed, continually broke out. “When are we to have another comedy from you, Mr. Cibber?” asked some admirer one day. “From me? who the deuce is there to act in it?” “Why, sir, there’s Garrick, Macklin, Pritchard, Clive.” “Oh, yes, I know your *dramatis personæ* well enough, but where the devil are your actors?” In spite of all this jealousy, Garrick’s reading of the part was accepted by a greater actor than Cibber. Foote adopted it almost in its entirety, but what Garrick had confined to the stage and its literature, he applied with infinite wit to the greater theatre of politics.

Fortune was not to be tempted by Garrick in comic parts alone. Having played with triumphant success in Lear and in Hamlet, he next essayed Macbeth. In the announcements of the performance, the public

were informed that it would be performed "as written by Shakespeare." It is a remarkable testimony to the state of the stage in the middle of the eighteenth century that this announcement should have excited so much comment. Neither the public nor the actors appear to have known that the corrupt version by Davenant, which they were accustomed to see, was not "Macbeth as written by Shakespeare." To them the debasement of the witch scene into one of low comedy and buffoonery and the interpolation of a number of speeches taken from other plays for the purpose of affording the actor an opportunity of making "points" was perfectly natural. Shakespeare had written it so—if not, so much the worse for Shakespeare. "What!" said Quin, "do not I play Shakespeare? pooh! pooh!" Considerable opposition was anticipated; a polite audience accustomed to the regular tragedy of the unities and of the rules, educated in the school of Mr. Addison's "Cato," and believing Mr. Nicholas Rowe to be one of the greatest of dramatic poets was hardly likely to appreciate the simplicity and naturalness of the great dramatist. The groundlings of the pit, too, who had associated some scenes of the play with the coarsest buffoonery of which a coarse age was capable, could not be expected to comprehend the weird poetry with which Shakespeare had invested the dying superstitions of his day. To avert the unfavourable verdict which he dreaded from both quarters as well as the personal ridicule which he feared might attach to the assumption of an heroic part by an actor of his confessedly diminutive figure, Garrick prepared an ironical pamphlet, on the title-page of which he put the motto, "Macbeth has murdered G——k." It was a burlesque

of the usual style of dramatic criticism and was written with considerable humour, the object being, of course, to have the laugh on his side from the first. Whether its publication was very wise or whether the pamphlet exercised the smallest influence on the public may be open to question. His success was open to none. Yet he appeared in this part under extraordinary difficulties. Finding it impossible to get his salary from Fleetwood, Garrick had seceded from Drury Lane, taking with him Macklin, Havard, Barry, Blakes, Mrs. Pritchard and Mrs. Clive, all of whom had grievances of their own against the manager. They had hoped to get the then Lord Chamberlain, the Duke of Grafton, to grant them a patent for the Opera House. The Duke contented himself with asking their salaries, and finding that a player received twice as much as a captain in the army, he refused to do anything to serve them. They were thus reduced to make terms with Fleetwood, and as Garrick was unquestionably the most important of the seceders, terms were first offered to him, which were sufficiently liberal to induce him to return to the stage of Drury Lane. His associates considered that he had betrayed them, and when the curtain drew up for *Macbeth*, a band of ruffians from Hockley-in-the-Hole and similar savoury districts made an immense disturbance. The theatre at once became the scene of a pitched battle between the champions of the actors and the bruisers whom Fleetwood, foreseeing a disturbance, had hired. In the end the latter prevailed. Garrick was allowed to perform, and as Mrs. Pritchard lived to support him, *Macbeth* became one of his finest parts.

Reference has been made to Garrick's diminutive

figure, which was indeed a source of constant annoyance and mortification to him. In parts like that in Abel Drugger in Ben Jonson's "Alchymist," it was indeed an advantage, but it required all his genius to overcome its deteriorating effect in heroic characters, such as those of Hamlet and Macbeth. To mend matters as far as possible, he was accustomed constantly to appear on the stage in shoes with cork soles an inch or more in thickness, but his efforts in this direction were not crowned with much success. The small fry of witlings found an inexhaustible spring of humour in the great actor's smallness of stature. Entering the stage with his face duly blackened for Othello, a wag in the pit called out, "Here is Pompey, but where is the tea-tray?" rather a long speech by the way for a pittite. Foote also had his bitter jest as usual, when he brought out the *Puppet Show*. "Are your puppets to be the size of life, Mr. Foote?" asked a lady. "No, madam," was the reply, "only a little larger than Garrick." Churchill rebuked the malevolent criticism when he put into the "Rosciad" in the mouth of "a snarling critic insolent as vain," the words,—

. . . . He's of stature somewhat low—  
Your hero should be always tall you know.  
True natural greatness all consists in height.'  
'Produce your voucher, critic.' 'Serjeant Kite.'

Great revolutions were in progress in matters theatrical in London during this engagement of Garrick. Fleetwood, oppressed with debt, had sold the remainder of the term for which his patent held good, to two bankers named Green and Amber, under whom first Lacy and then Rich, son to that Christopher Rich

who had been made “gay” by the “Beggar’s Opera,” acted as managers. John Rich’s principal qualification for the post would seem to have been that he hated English actors and the English drama pretty cordially. He had himself tempted fortune with very moderate success in some small part in the “Earl of Essex,” and, disgusted with his failure, had turned his back upon the regular drama. In its stead he introduced a new species of entertainment, somewhat after the French manner. This entertainment, which was the immediate parent of the modern pantomime, consisted of a story, usually taken from the Metamorphoses of Ovid or some similar source, interspersed with scenes in which were portrayed the loves of harlequin and columbine, enlivened with those magical touches of the bat of the former with which the modern stage is tolerably familiar. In these harlequinades, Rich was unrivalled, as, indeed, he deserved to be, sparing as he did no expense in their production, and having at his command the largest and best-fitted stage in England. The public on their part fully appreciated his efforts for their amusement, and showed by liberal support that he had caught their taste. The patent of the other house had in the meantime passed into the hands of Lacy, who had acquired the greater part of his experience by the management of Ranelagh, which had so prospered in his hands as to leave him with a comfortable surplus of some 4000*l.* Coming thus to Covent Garden with a competent knowledge of theatrical matters, he saw the necessity for vigorous effort to withstand the popularity of the harlequinades of Drury Lane. He, therefore, brought over from Ireland the most popular of the Dublin actors, Spranger

Barry, whose success in lovers' parts had made for him a wonderful reputation. With Barry he engaged also Macklin, Yates, Beard, Giffard and his wife, Mrs. Clive, and Mrs. Woffington, the last of whom had, in spite of Garrick's genuine fondness and indulgence, finally deserted him. Rich, in his turn, seeing how formidable such an opposition might become, secured, in addition to what was already a very decent company, the services of Garrick, Quin, and Mrs. Cibber. To Garrick, who had added both to his popularity and to his experience by another visit to Dublin, he entrusted the management of the more serious business of the stage, retaining in his own hands the direction of his beloved ballets and pantomimes, to which he regarded tragedy and comedy alike as mere succedanea. With Quin Garrick divided the greater parts, playing them on alternate nights with him. He was, however, so popular that the veteran frequently had the mortification of finding himself playing to a half-empty house in the very part in which his rival had the night before been greeted by a crowded audience. He may possibly have found some consolation in the applause he received when playing in the same piece with Garrick, but he does not appear to have done so, and half the theatrical memoirs of this date are filled with stories of his jealousy and spite. He was, as actors went, no bad one for the period in which he flourished. Churchill in the "Rosciad," says of him,—

His words bore sterling weight ; nervous and strong,  
In manly tides of sense they roll'd along.  
Happy in art he chiefly had pretence  
To keep up numbers yet not forfeit sense.  
No actor ever greater heights could reach,  
In all the laboured artifice of speech.

The poet goes on, however, to argue that speech and its artifices do not constitute acting, and he points out that if an actor wishes to makes his audience feel he must feel himself. That Quin failed to do.

His eyes in gloomy socket taught to roll,  
Proclaim'd the sullen habit of his soul.  
Heavy and phlegmatic he trod the stage,  
Too proud for tenderness, too dull for rage.

\* \* \* \* \*

In whate'er cast his character was laid,  
Self still, like oil, upon the surface play'd.  
Nature, in spite of all his skill, crept in—  
Horatio, Dorax, Falstaff—still 'twas Quin.

Than such a man probably no more perfect foil to Garrick could have been obtained. It is related of him that once playing Horatio to Garrick's Lothario in "The Fair Penitent," in the scene where the latter challenges the former, he so drawled out his answer, "I'll meet thee there," that somebody called out from the gallery, "Why don't you tell the gentleman whether you'll meet him or not?" In spite of his faults, however, he had always been a decent and a useful actor, and before the advent of Garrick he had been a very popular one, so that his reduction to a secondary position must have been a source of deep mortification to him. Another circumstance was now added to complete his humiliation. Garrick had written a gay little farce in which he himself played, and which had for title "Miss in her Teens." Night after night the town crowded to laugh with and applaud the author-actor. Quin was called upon to play some of his graver parts before the farce, but finding that the public came to laugh at "Miss in her Teens," and not to be terrified by his tragedy, he repented his complaisance, and swore lustily that he

would not degrade himself "by holding up the tail of any farce." A good-natured friend carried the story to Garrick, who was naturally very indignant. His revenge was, however, characteristic. Quin drew his salary as usual, but his name did not appear in the bills so long as the run of the farce continued.

From a virtual managership, Garrick was now to assume a real one. Finding that the public crowded to Covent Garden, Lacy very wisely offered to Garrick a moiety of his patent for the moderate sum of 8000*l.* The actor at once saw the immense advantage which he might derive from such a property, and after very little hesitation concluded the treaty in April, 1747. Profitable though Rich had found his engagement of Garrick, (and Davies says that he made no less than 8500*l.* between September, 1746, and May, 1747,) he was always ungrateful enough to regard the great actor as a hindrance rather than as a help, and was by no means sorry to be rid of him, and free to produce his beloved pantomimes and menagerie shows without let or hindrance. Such of the players, however, as possessed higher views of their art than Rich, and a clearer perception of the value of Garrick to the stage were not long in leaving the unappreciative manager, and enlisting under the banner of the rival house, which opened in September with a prologue written by Johnson—not the worst of his efforts in that walk of literature. Some lines of it may even now be found amongst the list of stock quotations. Thus most readers will remember—

From bard to bard the frigid caution crept,  
Till declamation roar'd while passion slept;

and—

The drama's laws, the drama's patrons give,  
For we that live to please, must please to live.

In the course of the season Garrick revived Ben Jonson's "Every Man in his Humour," "Romeo and Juliet," and "Macbeth." It is greatly to Garrick's honour that he was the first manager of his time to appreciate the transcendent genius of our national poet. Of the thirty-five known plays of Shakespeare, he regularly gave seventeen or eighteen in every season, and he played them more nearly as they had been left by their author, than had been done for very many years. It is true that he made some additions and some excisions, but they were always excusable on the ground of the necessity for having a good "acting version." Such as it was, moreover, the play as Garrick gave it was always the genuine work of Shakespeare, and was, in consequence, almost as fresh as a new play to his audience. The garbled and corrupt versions of Davenant and Cibber had replaced the genuine work of the poet, which, in fact, had been treated as a sort of quarry from which every one took what best suited his purpose, and used without much reference or care for its intrinsic fitness. In this way Otway stole the plot and characters of "Romeo and Juliet," to transfer them to a dull, pompous, and formal tragedy of his own to which he gave the name of "Caius Marius." Others followed his example, and it was thus, and thus only, that Englishmen up to the middle of the last century knew the works of their greatest dramatist.

One of Garrick's first acts in his new position of manager was a kindness to his old friend and tutor Johnson. Twenty years before, they had left Lichfield together, Johnson to try his fortune with a tragedy, Garrick to make experiments in another line of life. The tragedy was unfinished; but within a few months

Johnson got it into a presentable condition and offered it to Fleetwood, who read but declined to produce it. Every other manager to whom it was offered—and it appears to have gone the usual round—endorsed Fleetwood's verdict. There were obvious reasons for this failure. Any one who will take the trouble to read the play will see that it is about as ill-suited for the stage as any work expressly designed for it could be. It is heavy and formal to an extraordinary degree. The very faults which Johnson saw in "Cato," and pointed out in the couplet from his prologue which has just been quoted, were precisely those which most distinguished "Irene." Johnson himself, in his preface to Shakespeare, says of the former work, "We find in 'Cato' innumerable beauties which enamour us of its author, but we see nothing that acquaints us with human sentiments or human actions; we place it with the fairest and the noblest progeny which judgment propagates by conjunction with learning; but 'Othello' is the vigorous and vivacious offspring of observation impregnated by genius. 'Cato' affords a splendid exhibition of artificial and fictitious manners, and delivers just and noble sentiments in diction easy, elevated, and harmonious; but its hopes and fears communicate no vibration to the heart; the composition refers us only to the writer; we pronounce the name of 'Cato' but we think on Addison." Again, in his life of Addison, Johnson says, "'Cato' is rather a poem in dialogue, than a drama; rather a succession of just sentiments in elegant language, than a representation of natural affections, or of any state probable or possible in human life. Nothing here excites or assuages emotion; here is no magical power of raising fantastic terror or wild anxiety. The events are expected with-

out solicitude, and are remembered without joy or sorrow. Of the agents we have no care ; we consider not what they are doing or what they are suffering ; we wish only to know what they have to say." No one will deny that this is very just and excellent criticism of "Cato," no one will pretend that it is not even more just and more excellent with regard to "Irene." That drama contains abundant philosophy ; much virtue and more declamation—the last of the most turgid kind, but in the important particulars of nature and passion it is wofully deficient. Witness the last speech of the heroine, when her husband has condemned her to death and the mutes are about to force her off,—

Unutterable anguish !  
Guilt and despair, pale spectres ! grin around me,  
And stun me with the yellings of damnation !  
Oh ! hear my pray'rs ! accept, all pitying heav'n,  
These tears, these pangs, these last remains of life ;  
Nor let the crimes of this detested day  
Be charged upon my soul. Oh ! mercy ! mercy !

In spite of its many and obvious faults, however, "Irene" was nearly—if not quite as good as any of the works fondly called tragedies which still held possession of the English stage. Such as it was, new chances seemed to present themselves in its favour. Garrick, the head of his profession, and manager of one of the principal theatres in London, had taken the play in hand, and had promised to produce it. When he came to read the manuscript, however, he found the play, as might have been anticipated, by no means fit for representation. Johnson had had absolutely no stage experience, and very naturally fell into mistakes, which Garrick wished to correct. "Johnson's temper

could not brook," says Boswell, "that a drama which he had formed with so much study, and had been obliged to keep more than the nine years of Horace, should be revised and altered at the pleasure of an actor." After some time his repugnance was overcome, and the play was produced with the alterations suggested. It was received with considerable coolness by the audience, and at one time was in imminent peril of being damned. Throughout the first four acts the audience were utterly apathetic. Boswell says they were "awed," but when in the last the heroine, played by Mrs. Pritchard, in compliance with a suggestion of Garrick's, spoke a couplet with the bow-string round her neck, they grew indignant and cried out "Murder! murder!" Poor Mrs. Pritchard vainly attempted to make herself heard, but in the end was compelled to leave the stage alive. The audience probably remembered the advice of Horace, but in view of the immense number of murders and violent deaths of which the stage has been the scene it is not very easy to understand the objection to this particular one. After the first night the objectionable passage was modified, and the play continued to run at least nine nights. The author's profit was considerable. Robert Dodsley gave him 100*l.* for the copyright, and the result of the three nights—the third, sixth and ninth, appropriated by long usage to the author—was a net sum of 195*l.* 17*s.* "Irene" was, however, at no time reproduced—which may be taken as affording abundant evidence that notwithstanding the care with which it had been got up, it was not, in Garrick's eyes, a successful play.

The indifferent success of the tragedy led to no breach in the friendly relations subsisting between Johnson and Garrick. The oddly assorted

pair continued, indeed, on the most affectionate terms during the whole of their joint lives. Johnson's love for David Garrick was, however, manifested in a way no less curious than characteristic. He appeared to consider his quondam pupil as a sort of chattel of his own, to be praised or contemned exactly as the humour of the moment inclined him. Students of Boswell will remember that he scarcely allowed any one to speak of him, whether by way of praise or of blame, without an immediate and flat contradiction. Sir Joshua Reynolds, alive to this weakness of his friend, wrote a lively little dialogue, printed for private circulation only, in which he ridiculed this peculiarity. The dialogue is in two parts. In the former, Sir Joshua, by high encomiums upon Garrick, is represented as drawing down upon him Johnson's censure; in the second, Mr. Gibbon, by taking the opposite side, calls forth his praise. It is impossible, it may be remarked in passing, to read this admirable *jeu d'esprit* without feeling that Reynolds meant something more than merely to satirize Johnson's way of talking about Garrick, and really intended also to enter a strenuous protest against the outrageous bearishness of Johnson's manner. The President of the Royal Academy was the most courteous of men, and it must have been distasteful in the extreme to him to find a friend for whom he entertained so deep a regard as he had for Johnson, continually outraging all the proprieties by a wanton coarseness and brutality in conversation, which would have been tolerated in no other man. By way of rebuke he either parodied or set down from recollection (Croker, on the authority of Sir George Beaumont, takes the latter view) a number of Johnson's most truculent

and unmannerly utterances, and though these dialogues curiously illustrate Johnson's treatment of Garrick, they were obviously designed with the secondary intention indicated above. In spite of this habit of Johnson's, however, there was a strong foundation of affectionate regard on both sides. Mr. Percy Fitzgerald, indeed, speaks of "a grudge born of ill-success" existing between the two men, but of this Boswell certainly affords no evidence. Garrick always spoke of his old friend and tutor in the kindest terms, and to the last made him an honoured guest in Southampton Street and at Hampton.

As a manager, it was not to be expected that Garrick's career, like those of all who attempt to govern a theatre, should be exempted from quarrelling and jealousies. Barry, whom he had brought over from Ireland, became envious of his greater success, and complained that he was called upon to act upon unlucky days and at improper seasons, as, for instance, if some great lady gave a rout or a concert. To such cases he attributed the thin houses which his performances drew, and he complained accordingly. Churchill told him a very different tale in the "Rosciad," where the poet explains that the actor fails because he is not natural.

What man like Barry with such pains can err  
In elocution, action, character ?

\* \* \* \* \*

Who else can speak so very, very fine,  
That sense may kindly end with every line ?

\* \* \* \* \*

When he appears most perfect still we find  
Something which jars upon and hurts the mind.  
Whatever lights upon a part are thrown,  
We see too plainly they are not his own.

No flame from Nature ever yet he caught ;  
Nor knew a feeling which he was not taught ;  
He raised his trophies on the base of art,  
And conn'd his passions as he conn'd his part.

Barry's remonstrances and complaints were incessant, but Garrick met them with great generosity and friendliness, even to the extent of allowing him to choose the nights for his appearances. His ill-success still attended him, and Garrick's indulgence served only to emphasize the fact that Barry pleased the play-going public less than the manager. The house was crowded whenever Garrick played, and half-empty when Barry took the leading parts. Mrs. Cibber, however, backed Barry's complaints, and the matter was finally adjusted by the migration of the discontented pair to Covent Garden, whither Mrs. Woffington and Quin speedily followed them. Barry's secession probably caused but small dissatisfaction to Garrick, but the loss of Mrs. Cibber was serious. She was unquestionably a great actress—though of an expiring school—and a singularly beautiful woman.

Form'd for the tragic scene, to grace the stage,  
With rival excellence of love and rage,  
Mistress of each soft art, with matchless skill  
To turn and wind the passions as she will,  
To melt the heart with sympathetic woe,  
Awake the sigh, or teach the tear to flow.

Mrs. Cibber was, at a time when tragedy was a staple dish at the national theatres, an invaluable colleague to the greatest male tragedian of the century. Rich knew her value, and treated her companion Barry with all possible consideration. They were allowed to do exactly as they pleased; to act on such nights as they chose, and to choose their own parts.

Manager Rich in the meantime troubled himself very little about them. His pantomimes and burlettas occupied far more of his attention than the serious dramas in which they appeared. Safe in his neglect, the new recruits at Covent Garden coolly entered upon a great scheme of rivalry to the "other house." Both theatres opened in October, 1749, with "Romeo and Juliet," Garrick playing at Drury Lane with Miss Bellamy, a young actress of much merit and more promise, as Juliet; while at Covent Garden Barry and Mrs. Cibber shared the labours of the night. Public opinion was, of course, divided as to the merits of the respective performances, but it came at last to be agreed that the best Romeo was at Drury Lane, and the best Juliet at Covent Garden. "At Covent Garden," says a contemporary, "I saw 'Juliet and Romeo,' at Drury Lane, 'Romeo and Juliet.'" There was a certain amount of public interest for a few days, and the usual crop of epigrams may be found in the magazines. The best was perhaps the well-known one by Hewitt, the friend of Sterne—the one quatrain which has preserved Mr. Hewitt's name from oblivion,—

"Well, what's to-night?" said angry Ned,  
As up from bed he rouses;  
"‘Romeo’ again!" and shakes his head,  
"A plague on both your houses."

The opposition continued for some little time without much profit to either party. On the twelfth night the bill was changed at Covent Garden, and the thirteenth was the last at the Lane, Garrick concluding the contest with a vivacious and not ungenuine epilogue, spoken by Mrs. Clive, which ended,—

I now proclaim a peace,  
And hope henceforth hostilities will cease.

No more shall either rack his brains to tease ye,  
But let the contest be, who most shall please ye.

Withdrawing "*Romeo and Juliet*," Garrick now produced a pantomime, in rivalry to Rich, whom he had just before met and vanquished on his own ground in a splendid funeral procession introduced into the last act of "*Romeo and Juliet*." This interpolation, by the way, was not the only one of which Garrick was guilty in this connexion. He had, as has been seen, distinguished himself by getting rid of the rubbish which Cibber and Davenant had heaped upon Macbeth, but when "*Romeo*" was produced he found the ending tame. Shakespeare kills Romeo after his combat with the Count of Paris. Garrick patched on the whole of that long and touching scene in the tomb of the Capulets. That it is unquestionably clever, and that it adds greatly to the success of "*Romeo and Juliet*," as an acting play, no one will deny, but it is really nothing more than a hash up of the original story as told by Bandello, and retold by Otway, with a few lines from modern plays. It is a somewhat remarkable testimony to the ability with which Garrick did his work, that even to the present day "*Romeo and Juliet*" is never presented without this fine and dramatic finale.

It is, however, time to return to Garrick's private life, which in this busy year of 1749 had passed through one of its most important changes. He was, in short, married on the 22nd of June to a certain Mademoiselle Eva Maria Violetta, a young danseuse of extraordinary beauty and accomplishments, of a stainless reputation, and much patronized by the noble family of Burlington. The whole story of Mademoiselle Violetta and her marriage is a romance. Ac-

cording to one account she was the daughter of an Italian woman of remarkable beauty, with whom Lord Burlington had formed a connexion at Venice several years before. The mother had disappeared, and Lord Burlington had never succeeded in discovering the whereabouts either of her or of her child, until by mere accident he happened to see Mademoiselle Violetta on the stage. Recognizing her by her extraordinary likeness to his lost mistress he invited her to his house, and inquiry into her connexions showed that his surmise had been correct, and that he had found his long-lost daughter. To atone as far as possible for his long though unintentional neglect, he retained her in his family as a companion to Lady Burlington, to whom he confided the story of her parentage, and by whom she was treated with the greatest kindness and affection. She did not appear again on the stage, but during the two or three years she remained in the household she devoted herself to the acquirement of the accomplishments necessary for her future condition, which Lady Burlington had determined should be very splendid.

Another story—presumably the true one—is almost as remarkable. According to it, Mademoiselle Violetta was born in Berlin, where she had been brought up under the care of Hilferding, the *maitre de ballet* in the Imperial Opera House. With some other young ladies she was educated to make the ballet her profession, but never appeared on any stage. Her native grace and beauty, however, caused her to be selected as partner to dance with the children of the Empress Maria Theresa, by whose command she assumed the name of Violetta in lieu of her family name of Veigel—a Viennese *patois* word of identical meaning. Whilst

thus occupied, the Emperor Frederick I. deigned to regard Mademoiselle Violetta with such marked attention that the Empress thought it desirable to get rid of the too charming young lady. A family named Rossiter, long settled in Vienna, were about to visit England to look after some property, and by the express desire of the Empress they took charge of Mademoiselle Violetta, who carried with her recommendations of the most exalted kind. When she arrived in England has not been settled, but she appears to have almost immediately taken up her abode in Burlington House. Walpole talks of her in a letter of the 5th of June, 1746, where he says, “The fame of the Violette increases daily. The sister Countesses of Burlington and Talbot exert all their stores of sullen partiality and competition for her. The former visits her and is having her picture, and carries her to Chiswick; and she sups at Lady Carlisle’s.” In spite of being thus competed for by countesses, she continued her studies for the stage, and was introduced by some of the Burlington family to Garrick. Her first appearance at Drury Lane was made on the 3rd of December, in this year, but her relations with Lady Burlington still continued. She lived in Burlington House, and the countess not merely carried her to the theatre in her coach, but waited for her at the wings with a cloak ready to throw over her when she came off the stage. The editor of the Garrick Correspondence mentions that she remembered being taken by the countess to the trial of poor mad old Lord Lovat in 1747.

Lady Burlington treated her in fact completely as her own daughter, and looked out for a husband suitable in rank to such a personage. Lord Coventry

was for a long time the favoured lover, so far as the family were concerned, but Mademoiselle Violetta had made her own choice. She saw Garrick, it is said, in Aaron Hill's solemnly dull tragedy of "Merope," and he won her heart. There is as usual a melodramatic story which has been very variously related, and which forms the basis of that German play which, Anglicised into "David Garrick" has afforded Mr. Sothern an opportunity for showing that he is capable of greater things than Lord Dundreary, brilliant though that impersonation unquestionably is. That story has been told so often and in so many ways that it is impossible now to say what is exactly the true version. It is, however, certain that Garrick, who was most passionately in love, behaved in so thoroughly honourable a way as not merely to conquer all opposition on the part of the Burlington family, but to induce them to give their free consent to the marriage. The sum of 10,000*l.* was settled upon her, of which they gave 6000*l.* and Garrick found the remainder; Lady Burlington being one of the trustees. As a further token of regard, her ladyship presented the bridegroom with a prayer book, in which, with his usual happy knack of turning a phrase, he wrote,—

This sacred book has Dorothea given  
To show a straying sheep the way to heaven;  
With forms of righteousness she well may part,  
Who bears the spirit in her upright heart.

The marriage turned out an eminently happy one, although it was one unblessed with offspring. There was a difference of religious belief, Mrs. Garrick being a Catholic, though not of a very rigid kind; and Garrick a Huguenot who had conformed to the Church of Eng-

land, but the difference was never so marked as to create the smallest disturbance of their affectionate relations. It was a matter of remark that during the whole of Garrick's life after his marriage, he was never separated from his wife for twenty-four hours at a time.

The wedding was followed by a summer holiday. Garrick and his bride moved about from place to place, staying now at Chiswick and now at Burlington House, but the continued exigence of Lady Burlington speedily became unendurable. At first the bride and bridegroom managed to tolerate a kindness which interfered with every arrangement they might make, and which produced a quarrel whenever the smallest change of plan was suggested ; but before long the thraldom became intolerable, and though Garrick still retained the friendship of Lord Burlington, the name of Lady Burlington fades out of the correspondence. The honeymoon had been intended to include a visit to the family of the bridegroom at Lichfield. That Lady Burlington's exigent affection rendered impossible, and it was not until the summer of 1751 that the pair were able to make the tour they had long planned. Instead of going to Lichfield, however, they went to Paris, where Garrick was received with singular honour. His French blood made him perfectly at home ; his wife's grace and beauty won universal homage, and he went with the strongest recommendations from his English patrons. The king, Louis XV., desired that Garrick should be presented to him ; he was received in good society as a consequence of his introduction to royalty ; the actors welcomed him and treated him as one of themselves ; while the men of letters, who were sowing the seeds of the Revolution, gave a most cordial reception to one whom they regarded

as a typical representative of English liberty. The most striking point about his visit was, however, the acquaintance with the celebrated Clairon which it brought about. Garrick's opinion of her was singularly high, and it is worthy of remark that the point which struck him most was the perfection and finish of her art.

In the theatre, meanwhile, matters had gone on after the usual fashion. Garrick had reappeared after his marriage in the part of Benedick, wherein the allusions to his changed estate were received by a friendly audience with kindly laughter and abundant applause. As time went on he added many fine plays to his *répertoire*, notably "The Gamester," by Edward Moore, and Mr. Crisp's "Virginia," in both of which the actor achieved a most striking success by discarding tradition and playing with startling and almost painful truth to nature. There is one scene in the latter tragedy of surprising force. Appius being seated on his tribunal, Claudius, the tool of the Decemvir, claims Virginia as a slave born in his house. During the declaration Garrick (Virginius), standing on the opposite side of the stage, remained motionless with his arms folded, and his eyes fixed on the ground. "By slow degrees he raised his head; after a slight pause, during which the spectators could read the struggle within him in a face which kept no secrets, he turned round slowly till his eyes rested on Claudius; then in the low, smothered voice of anguish, tears gushing as he spoke the words, his broken heart sobbed out, 'Thou traitor.'" It is easy to understand how an audience accustomed to the rant and thunder of the school of Quin and Mossop would at first hardly know how to receive a piece of romantic acting like this, and how when once they

understood it they should have broken out, as the writer who relates the story tells us they did, after a pause into a general shout of applause.

These were not the only new dramatists whom Garrick introduced to the public. He was, in fact, never unwilling to assist young authors, and he invariably behaved to them with a courtesy which offered an agreeable contrast to the conduct of Colley Cibber, whose notorious brutality is illustrated by a hundred anecdotes in the theatrical memoirs of the earliest years of the last century. Thus when Fenton (that Fenton who had assisted Pope in his translation of Homer) offered his tragedy of "Mariamne" to Cibber, he is said to have returned it to the author with the pithy advice that he should "apply himself to some useful trade, for it was certain that he and the muses would never agree." Whenever too he had to send back a first attempt he seems to have taken a malicious pleasure in the ungracious task, speaking of it with grim facetiousness as "the choking of young singing-birds." Of conduct such as this Garrick was never guilty. An author was always sure of a courteous reception and his work was so carefully considered that if it were returned he might be quite sure that it was because it was utterly unsuited to stage purposes. As a result of this generous mode of treatment Garrick produced an immense number of plays, which have now, from the change of public taste and the adoption of a better model, passed into utter oblivion. Who in these days knows more than the names—if indeed the very names themselves are not forgotten—of Cleone, the Orphan of China, the Earl of Essex, Orestes, Elvira, and Mustapha? They have gone to their own place, and in spite of the Queen Anne revival the taste of to-day

is not likely to endure a resuscitation of these stilted and artificial works. Public taste was indeed at a low ebb in those days. The Revolution of 1648 had swept away English art; the restoration had brought back a purely French taste which in turn had been overwhelmed by the Dutch fashions introduced in 1688, and whatever of artistic feeling survived was crushed by the irruption of the half-civilized German brood who came in with the House of Hanover. Readers of the Four Georges scarcely need to be reminded that George II. "hated poetry and bairters," or that the fashionable world followed their sovereign's lead. That amiable monarch went to sleep over the finest poetry in the language, and thought the prince of painters of his day amply rewarded with a guinea given with the same grace that he would have exhibited in bestowing a bone upon a hungry and impatient dog. Of a like quality was his taste in theatrical matters. Murphy mentions that he insisted upon the revival of certain scenes in Otway's "Venice Preserved," which had for many years been omitted because of their gross indecency. He was induced on one occasion, however, to command a performance of Richard III., though it was impossible for those about him to convince him that the actor of that part could be an honest man. The actors on this occasion were terrified to observe that all their efforts failed to produce the slightest appearance of interest in the unintelligent face of their sovereign, who indeed seemed to be in a doze during the greater part of their performance. At the conclusion of the play Mr. Fitzherbert, who had been in attendance, went into the green-room, where he was immediately seized upon by Garrick with eager questioning as to what the king thought of Richard.

"I can say nothing on that head," replied Fitzherbert; "but when an actor told Richard, 'The Mayor of London comes to greet you,' the king roused himself; and when Taswell entered, buffooning his part as usual, the king exclaimed, 'Duke of Grafton, I like dat Lord Mayor,' and when the scene was over the king said, 'Duke of Grafton, that is good Lord Mayor.'" "Well," said Garrick, "but the warlike bustle, the drums and trumpets, and the shouts of the soldiers must have aroused a great military genius!" "I know nothing about that," replied Fitzherbert; "but when Richard was in Bosworth Field, calling for the horse, his Majesty said, 'Duke of Grafton, will that Lord Mayor not come again?'"

Any attempt to follow out in detail the course of Garrick's management of Drury Lane would be tedious and uninteresting in the extreme. The reader of to-day probably cares as much for the story of his entanglement with Noverre, the dancer, and of his attempt to rival Rich in pantomime, as he does for the last failure of a lessee of our "national theatre," or for the success of a speculative manager who brings over an actress who has won laurels in Vienna or St. Petersburg. It is necessary therefore to make a leap over some seven or eight years, during which Garrick managed Drury Lane with singular success, and to allow a more important personage to make his appearance, Charles Churchill—a clergyman who had vainly struggled against an adverse fortune until his thirtieth year, and then had suddenly leaped into fame by the production of his "Rosciad" in 1761. This poem, which appeared after only two obscure advertisements, was in the hands of every one in the course of a week, and became the chief, if not the only, topic of conversation in the clubs and

coffee-houses. The work is too well known for elaborate criticism—it is only necessary to mention that the poet, after passing in review all the actors and actresses of the day, concluded by awarding the palm to Garrick:—

Garrick, take the chair ;  
Nor quit it 'till thou place an equal there.

The noble and stirring lines in which Churchill announced his judgment—an eulogy such as few artists before or since have merited, while certainly none have received the like—attracted little attention from Garrick. There is something to be said for the actor. He was a busy man and a brilliant one; his time was constantly occupied, and as is usually the case with a successful man, he was besieged from dawn to sunset with a host of adulatory poets, epigrammatists, and would-be dramatists, who sought to catch him by their paltry flatteries. He seems to have classed Churchill amongst the hangers-on of a man in his position, and to have treated his compliments as interested. He had even what a recent writer has called the “fribbling folly” to hint to one of those toadies who hang about every theatre that he “supposed the fellow had treated him civilly with a view to the freedom of the house.” The worst that can be said for such a speech as this is that it was a mistake, but it was a very excusable mistake after all. Poor Garrick in life and in death was the victim of the poetasters of his age. When after his death the booksellers printed “The Life and Death of David Garrick, Esq.,” they gave as the opening item of their pamphlet first “Churchill’s beautiful character of Mr. Garrick,” and following it, “Lines from Sheridan’s monody on the death of Mr. Garrick, spoken by Mrs. Yates at Drury Lane Theatre;” a “Prize Monody on

the death of Mr. Garrick for the vase at Bath Easton, by Miss Seward," and an "Extract from Thespis, or a critical examination into the merits of the performers at Drury Lane." Churchill had said,—

If manly sense, if Nature link'd with art ;  
If thorough knowledge of the human heart ;  
If power of acting vast and unconfined ;  
If fewest faults with greatest beauties join'd  
If strong expression and strange power which lie  
Within the magic circuit of the eye ;  
If feeling which no face like his can know,  
And which no other face so well as his can show,  
Deserve the preference . . . . κ.τ.λ.

This sort of thing was echoed by scores of poets who were ambitious of the "freedom of the Theatre," and when after his death we find even Sheridan and Miss Seward writing twaddle in his praise, it is easy to understand the temper in which he looked at all these versified tributes. Sheridan and Miss Seward were about equally bad. The former enjoins the "Sweet Muse" to—

Hang o'er his sculptured bier  
With patient woe that loves the lingering tear ;  
With thoughts that mourn, nor yet desire relief,  
With much regret and fond enduring grief ;  
With looks that speak he never shall return !  
Chilling thy tender bosom, clasp his urn ;  
And with soft sighs disperse th' irreverend dust  
Which time may strew upon his Sacred Bust.

Miss Seward was, if possible, worse :—

Breathe, Genius, still the tributary sigh !  
Still gush, ye liquid pearls, from Beauty's eye !  
With slacken'd strings suspend your harps, ye Nine,  
While round his urn yon cypress wreath ye twine !  
Then give his merits to your loudest fame,  
And write in sunbright lustre GARRICK's name !

Surely the unfortunate manager who received adulatory odes of this quality by the dozen week after week may be forgiven if he looks at them all somewhat slightly, and sometimes fails to distinguish the true from the false. Churchill could not forgive, however, and in a few weeks he launched at Garrick a warning as sharp and as bitter as his praise had been generous. The reviewers had been hard upon the "Rosciad," and before the town had had time to recover from the sensation caused by the appearance of that poem the author's answer to them came out. Half of the "Apology" consisted of a bitter and scornful attack upon the theatre, and here Garrick did not escape. "Let the vain tyrant," wrote Churchill,—

Let the vain tyrant sit amidst his guards,  
His puny green-room wits and venal bards,  
Who meanly tremble at a puppet's frown,  
And for a playhouse freedom lose their own.

The savage and contemptuous warning had its effect. Garrick wrote at once to Robert Lloyd, who was a friend of both actor and satirist, in terms which were really almost too humble and deprecatory. Before this he had, however, written to Churchill in a manner which was even more painfully abject. This letter he happily showed to a friend, who dissuaded him from sending it by a representation that Churchill had attacked him without any real provocation, and that it was too great a condescension on his part to write so elaborate a vindication of his own conduct to any one, poet and satirist though he might be, and finally that expressions so humiliating as those of which he had made use could do him no good with any one, least of all with Churchill. Still Lloyd's interference was successful, and a reconciliation was effected without

much difficulty. The poet boasted that he never accepted a "playhouse freedom" from any manager, but he was a constant visitor at Drury Lane, and he was not above—when "half-drunk, half-mad, and quite stripped of all his money"—sending on occasion to borrow "five pieces" from the prosperous manager. The friendship between the two men was a curious one, but it lasted during the whole of the unfortunate poet's four years of town life. Garrick, however, could not forget the indignity with which he had been treated, and in a poem which he published some little time after, and which bears the title of the "Fribbleriad," he rehearses the bad names which had been at various times applied to him with something of the same rueful precision as that with which Pope catalogues at the end of the "Dunciad" the nicknames which the dolts of his time applied to him. The thing—which was aimed at one Fitzpatrick—the object of most terrible denunciation in the "Rosciad"—was soon forgotten, but it deserves a word of mention, inasmuch as it contains a pleasant portrait of Churchill. After a scathing attack on Fitzgerald, the meaning of which does not lie on the surface, Garrick says,—

With colours flying, beat of drum—  
Unlike to this, see Churchill come.  
And now like Hercules he stands,  
Unmask'd his face, but arm'd his hands,  
Alike prepared to write or drub—  
This holds a pen, and that a club.  
"Mine is the Rosciad—mine!" he cries,  
"Who says 'tis not, I say, he lies!"

On the whole, however, Garrick's conduct in this business does not appear to have been very dignified. His faults were probably due to the constant irritable

nervousness as to his popularity by which he was beset. It has been seen how, when announced for Macbeth, he was betrayed into the publication of a pamphlet which, witty though it undoubtedly was, had been much better left unprinted. His marriage had led him to publish and to get his friends to gather a quantity of verse designed to anticipate potential ridicule, and the same temper led him to anticipate any possible laughter which might be raised against him on his return from his second journey to Paris some years later by the publication of a piece of not very brilliant verse, to which he gave the title of "The Sick Monkey."

But if Garrick were irritable when his reputation was concerned, he could be liberal and generous enough upon occasion. Innumerable stories are told of his parsimony, not a few of which redound more to the discredit of the inventors than to his own. Fielding, for example, once gave his servant a penny wrapped in a piece of paper, and when remonstrated with for playing a practical joke on a servant, replied with a rather brutal insolence that he had given that sum because if he had offered more Garrick would himself have confiscated the money. If Fielding had given the crown piece to the man privately the story would have lost nothing of its point, but of anything of that kind history is silent. The other stories of his meanness may be traced to Macklin or to Foote, both of whom were under deep obligations to Garrick—and all the world knows that there is nothing so difficult to pardon as an obligation. For the rest Garrick was certainly prudent in money-matters, and economized in small things; but he could be liberal and even splendid when liberality was necessary. Solicited once by a

friend on behalf of a poor woman, he asked what he was expected to give : being told three or four guineas, he made the practical answer of handing over a bill for 30*l.* Another woman, who had no claim on him whatever beyond such as arose from her having known him as a child in Lichfield, on applying to him for help, received a hundred guineas. A friend, who owed him 500*l.*, fell into difficulties, upon hearing of which Garrick without any solicitation enclosed the bill in a letter, desiring his friend to put both into the fire. Besides being generous in pecuniary matters such as these, Garrick was eminently kind and liberal to the members of his own profession. Colman's connexion with him began with a quarrel. The author abused the actor as a "grimace-maker," a "haberdasher of wry faces," "a hypocrite who laughed and cried for hire," and so forth. Garrick's reply shows genuine magnanimity. He took no notice of the harsh epithets, but wrote verses in praise of Colman's translation of "Terence," and converted his libeller into a friend. When Tate Wilkinson wished to appear in tragedy, Garrick, without a thought of rivalry, rendered the kindest and most generous assistance, even to the point of presiding over the "making up" of his face, to which he put the finishing touches with his own hands. Hiffernan, an Irish adventurer, whom Garrick had generously helped, repaid his kindness with a most scurrilous libel, the only object of which was to obtain a few guineas for its suppression. Base as this conduct was he never spoke harshly of his assailant, but treated him rather as an object of compassion. Dr. John Hill, who on the strength of a knighthood which he pretended to have received from the king of Sweden, called himself Sir John, and who forced himself into notoriety by his

attacks upon the Royal Society, induced Garrick to play a farce of his called “The Rout.” It was so hopelessly bad that it was hissed off the stage on the first night. The luckless author chose to consider that the fault lay not in the badness of the farce but in the incompetence of the actor, and filled the papers with abusive libels upon him. To all of them he might have made a crushing reply, but instead of doing so, or of taking legal action, he contented himself with the well-known epigram,—

For physic and farces, his equal there scarce is,  
His farces are physic, his physic a faree is.

Smollett, a writer of a different calibre from either of these, succeeded in inducing Garrick to play his tragedy of the “Regicide” against his own better judgment, and also against the earnest advice of Quin, whom he consulted on the subject. When the play was produced it failed dismally, and the public endorsed the verdict of the playgoers when it was printed. Smollett still chose to consider that the blame lay with Garrick, and libelled him grossly in “Roderick Random,” repeating the offence in his second novel, “Peregrine Pickle,” which he produced some three years later. He had, nevertheless, the courage to offer a two-act comedy, “The Tars of Old England,” to Garrick some time afterwards; and he, generously forgetful of past injuries and insults, produced the piece with as much care as if Smollett had been one of those “venal bards” with whom Garrick was accused of surrounding himself. The play was moderately successful, and produced the author a good third night, on which occasion Garrick generously charged him twenty guineas less for the use of the theatre than he was by custom entitled to.

His conduct with reference to Goldsmith has been made the subject of frequent complaint by the admirers of that unfortunate genius. The saying about there being two sides to every story is, however, eminently applicable to that of the relations of these two men. The case lies in a very small compass. Hugh Kelly, the founder of the sentimental school of English comedy, who had begun life as a stay-maker in Dublin, was one of the most successful playwrights of his time. To readers of the present day, however, his comedies have very much of the flavour of the religious tracts of the last century. His dialogue is, indeed, fairly natural, and he shows some signs of both pathos and humour; but his extraordinary notion of treating the stage not as a place for the exhibition of human passion, but as a school of morality and religion, prevented his making the most of such dramatic qualities as he possessed. The sentimental comedy which he introduced became, however, the rage for a considerable time. His first play, "False Delicacy," was produced by Garrick, and was an enormous success. For years it drew crowded audiences whenever it was revived, until Foote destroyed it in a piece of exquisite satire—"Piety in Pattens, or the Handsome House-maid," one of the pieces produced in his "Puppet Show" in the Haymarket. Whilst Kelly's play was in rehearsal, Garrick had the "Good-Natured Man" under consideration, and it is not surprising that when "False Delicacy" was so remarkably successful he should have been doubtful as to the chances of success for a piece so utterly and strikingly different in character. Davies gives a very fair and impartial account of the manner in which the negotiation was conducted, from which it would appear that although Garrick

certainly assumed a rather irritating air of patronage in the matter, Goldsmith was by no means free from blame, and certainly took a rather pettish and irritable tone, which Garrick very naturally resented. Garrick suggested some alterations, and on the strength of them advanced a considerable sum of money to Goldsmith. He can, therefore, hardly be blamed if he felt and expressed some little natural indignation when he not merely found his suggestions disregarded, but the piece actually taken over to the rival house. The change was the more mortifying from the fact that the animosity between the managers on both sides was deeper and more bitter than ever. Goldsmith's ill-treatment, however, failed to alienate Garrick altogether. When some time afterwards the inimitable "She Stoops to Conquer" was produced, Garrick wrote a gay and sparkling prologue, which, admirably spoken by Woodward, exercised a material influence on the success of the piece.

By the beginning of the year 1763 Garrick was rich as well as famous, and was thus in a position to indulge in the luxury of foreign travel. At the end of the season he therefore set off in company with Mrs. Garrick, leaving Colman to look after his interests at Drury Lane. His route was the old and well-trodden one through St. Omer and Arras, and so to Paris, which he reached on the 19th of September, having been four days on the way. He found the city but little changed, but since his last visit the French had been seized with an Anglomania, bred of the philosophy which had overrun French thought. The school of French thinkers, of the eighteenth century had risen out of the ruins of English metaphysics of the seventeenth, and it is not surprising to find that amongst such a people a great Englishman should have been most cordially welcomed.

The members of his own profession flocked to pay him homage; every salon was opened to him, and the Baron d'Holbach made him free of his great dinners. Three weeks were pleasantly spent in this way, and then Garrick started on his journey southwards. Voltaire sent him a message, inviting him to Ferney; but though the invitation was accepted, the visit was destined never to take place. Through Turin, Milan, and Genoa, the travellers made their way to Rome, and thence to Naples where they spent Christmas. At Naples Garrick was treated with the greatest kindness by the distinguished English families who were in residence there. Lord and Lady Spencer took him to Herculaneum, and Lady Oxford presented him to the king. He stayed here for three months, living in a whirl of gaiety, yet surrounded by a famine which was literally decimating the poor of the city, and which he remembered afterwards "with horror." Then by way of Rome and Parma, he got to Venice in the suite of the Duke of York. There he stayed, studying scenery, costumes, and effects, looking out for dancers, and sending home models of Italian scenery for the painters at Drury Lane, until the middle of June, 1764. He would then have returned home, but Mrs. Garrick, who had been ill with a "humatiz," was still suffering, and could be moved only with the greatest difficulty. Finally she tried the mud-baths of Albano, near Parma, which Baretti had promised would restore her, and which certainly produced an excellent effect. Leaving her crutches behind her, they started for England, and reached Munich in August, where Garrick was taken ill with a bilious fever. Happily an English doctor was at hand, and under his care the disease was stayed, though not until poor Garrick was reduced to the condition of a living skeleton. "I have lost," he wrote,

“legs, arms, belly, cheeks, &c., I have scarce anything left but bones, and a pair of dark lack-lustre eyes that are retired an inch or two more into their sockets, and wonderfully set off the parchment that covers the cheek-bones.” It was not until October that he again reached Paris. There good air, horse exercise, and lively society, soon re-established his health. It is no small testimony to the amiable qualities of the man, and to his wonderful talent for society, that when twelve years later Gibbon visited in the circles which he had frequented, the *habitués* were loud in their regrets that he was no longer amongst them.

Garrick returned to London at the close of April, 1765, and one of his first acts was a piece of magnificence which alone ought to have silenced at once and for ever the cruel sneers at his meanness and parsimony. During his absence the Drury Lane Theatrical Fund had been established. Garrick at once took it under his protection, paid the cost of an Act of Parliament for its incorporation, and presented it with a house in Drury Lane as the place of meeting. It may be convenient in this place to record the fact that some time afterwards, finding that money would be more valuable to the fund than the house, he bought it back at a good price, and once more bequeathed the property to the trustees by his will : that the whole profits of his last appearance on the stage were given to the fund, and that in one way and another his benefactions amounted to nearly or quite 5000*l.*

Passing over the theatrical history of the next four years, in which, indeed, there is little of any special interest, we come to 1769, the year of the Shakespeare Jubilee at Stratford-on-Avon. The whole of this business appears to have arisen out of a little bit of

provincial scheming. Not long before the Rev. Mr. Gastrell, out of pure wantonness as it would seem, had cut down the venerable mulberry-tree which tradition asserted had been planted by the hands of Shakespeare himself. A gentleman of the town was deputed to present a snuff-box made of the wood of the tree to Garrick, with the freedom of the corporation and a modest request that he would present to their new Town Hall a bust or portrait of Shakespeare and a portrait of himself. Out of this sprang the celebration of the 6th of September. It was a dismal failure. The good folks of Stratford-on-Avon saw in it only an opportunity for fleecing the player-folk and the gentry who had come down to prove their taste or to do honour to Garrick, and they certainly made the most of it. As for the Jubilee proceedings the very stars in their courses fought against them. The oratorio of "Judith" in the church was a failure; the procession of actors, actresses, and supers in Drury Lane finery was a failure of an even worse kind, and the performance of Whitehead's ode in honour less of Shakespeare than of Garrick in the "elegant" Rotunda was the most lamentable fiasco of all. The whole affair—stewards, wands, mulberry medallions, white-topped gloves, fireworks that would not go off, rain and mud-bedraggled masquerading, Whitehead's ode above all—was supremely ridiculous. Even the absurdity of Boswell, who paraded the streets in a Corsican dress, and with a hat bearing the inscription "Corsica Boswell," was exceeded by the deplorable exhibition which Garrick made of himself. Foote was, of course, present, and though he was under great personal obligations to Garrick, he could not refrain from giving the rein to his satirical temper. Garrick was at first seriously offended by his intention of

burlesquing the business, but the Marquis of Stafford good-naturedly interfered, and the rival managers met on his doorstep at dinner-time. "What is it to be, war or peace?" asked Garrick. "Oh, peace by all means!" replied Foote. They shook hands, and at no future time was there any coolness between the two managers, rivals though they were.

The end was not far distant. When Garrick returned from the continent his closest friends had gone over to the majority; and when, in March, 1776, Hoadly, one of his most intimate associates, died of gout at Winchester, he confessed himself "tired of the cap and bells." The long illness which had assailed him on his foreign tour had weakened him somewhat seriously, and the toils and anxieties of his laborious profession also told upon him. He was under no necessity to continue to labour, possessing as he did a handsome fortune, besides a share in the patent of the theatre, which after his retirement sold for no less a sum than 35,000*l.* In June, 1776, therefore, whilst his intellectual powers were still unimpaired, and whilst he still retained the physical capacity for enjoyment, he retired from the stage. His last appearance was in the character of Felix, in "The Wonder," before which he spoke a prologue, mentioning the fact that the performance that evening was for the benefit of the Actors' Fund. Some of the lines have the old gay ring about them.

Shan't I, who oft have drench'd my hands in gore,  
Stabb'd many, poison'd some, beheaded more,  
Who numbers slew in battle on this plain,  
Shan't I, the slayer, try to feed the slain?  
Brother to all, with equal love I view  
The men who slew me, and the men I slew.

But the jesting was over when the moment for farewell came, and his parting address—a dozen lines of simple thanks—was interrupted by a flood of tears.

Garrick's retirement was singularly happy. The most distinguished persons in England vied with each other for the privilege of entertaining him. Lady Georgina Spencer, Lord Rigby, and Lord Camden hailed with great gratification the time when their brilliant friend could visit them without interfering with his professional occupations. He in turn received his friends in his rural retreat at Hampton in the summer, and at his house in the Adelphi in the winter. Occasionally he visited the House of Commons, and there one night, when the order to clear the gallery was enforced, during a stormy debate, he was allowed by acclamation to keep his seat, Burke paying a generous tribute to the "great master of elocution, by whose lessons they had all profited." One by one his friends died off, and his own turn was not long in coming. Weston, Shuter, Spranger, Barry, Woodward, and Foote were all gone, and disease was making rapid inroads on his once fine constitution. Two drops of gall were mingled in the dregs of his cup of life. The company of Drury Lane quarrelled over the fund to which he had contributed so generously, and no small part of their ill-feeling was vented upon him. Worse was to come. At a moment when his illness was really most serious, one of those scoundrels who eke out a base existence by levying black mail for the suppression of libels, brought an infamous charge against him. Not one of his friends believed it, but it was made sufficiently public to cause him infinite suffering.

Garrick spent Christmas, 1778, with his friend, Lord

Spencer, at Althorp ; and in the midst of the festivities of the season he was seized with a severe attack of his old enemy, the stone. He recovered sufficiently to be removed to London, and on the 15th of January, 1779, he reached his house in the Adelphi. His friends of the medical profession rallied round him—Heberden, Warren, and Schomberg—but their skill was unavailing. Garrick passed quietly away at eight in the morning of the 20th, followed two days afterwards by his *alter ego*, his brother George. On the 1st of February he was laid in Poet's Corner, in Westminster Abbey, amidst a regret more universal than perhaps ever followed an actor to the grave. "The death of Garrick," said Dr. Johnson, "has eclipsed the gaiety of nations," and the phrase was truer than such epigrammatic sayings usually are. Johnson and Burke broke into open tears when they heard of it, and his numerous friends in France shared their grief.

In estimating the character and worth of Garrick there are considerable difficulties, but that he was fairly entitled to the epithets both of great and good, may fairly be conceded. During his life he moved constantly in the society of persons of intellectual and social rank, and he won the esteem and regard of all. Two charges only have been brought against him, and of those Goldsmith has certainly made the most in "Retaliation." One is, that he was greedy of money ; the other, that he was a glutton of praise. As regards the latter accusation, we know on very good authority that "praise is the breath of an actor's nostrils," but if by the charge it is intended to insinuate that he was unworthily anxious for popularity, as Goldsmith accuses him of having been, it can only be said that there is something not altogether unamiable in the

desire to be generally loved, which is evident in every page of his voluminous correspondence. The charge of avarice may be at once dismissed. No man has laid himself less open to it, and even Johnson—who repeated it most frequently—was compelled to admit, according to Davies, “that he believed David Garrick gave away more money than any man in London.” Professionally, he was without a rival in his own time, and for versatility he has never since been equalled. Fielding paid him a fine compliment when he made Partridge in describing “Hamlet” say that “Garrick was no actor : when he saw the ghost he trembled, turned pale, and started just as I should have done had I seen a real one.” And this gives us a clue to the real greatness of his acting. He was perfectly natural. Under him the stage was emancipated from those traditions which prescribed that verse should always be delivered in a kind of recitative ; that the actor should never sit down, and so forth. Whatever he acted he *was* for the time being, whether Hamlet or Abel Drugger, Othello or Dr. Caius. To him we owe it further that Shakespeare was restored, after a long banishment, to the English stage in an unmutilated condition, and it was under his guidance and direction that the ranting and stilted tragedy of Dryden and his followers gradually made way for something better and more natural. His theatre was perhaps not perfect, but it was infinitely purer when he left the stage than at the opening of his career. Vice was not encouraged ; vicious plays were sternly discountenanced ; and it became, during his reign, possible for a lady to visit the theatre without a mask to conceal her blushes.

## RICHARD CUMBERLAND.

AMONGST the ghosts of the men of past times evoked by the genius of the author of the "Roundabout Papers," it is rather a remarkable fact that the once famous author of the "West Indian" and a host of other plays, all more or less successful in their time, should never once make his appearance. Yet Richard Cumberland was conspicuous enough in his own day. A learned and successful author; a playwright whose works, though they do not now keep the stage, were nevertheless important in their time; the friend of Johnson, Reynolds, Goldsmith, and Garrick; a poet, politician, essayist and critic of no mean attainments,—he was in every sense a man of mark in his own day; so much so, indeed, as to make it somewhat extraordinary that he should be so entirely forgotten in ours. One reason possibly may be found in the jealousy with which the world is apt to regard a man of too varied accomplishments. He "who in the course of one revolving moon" essays the various parts of "poet, statesman, fiddler, and buffoon," stands a great chance of being remembered by posterity as neither one nor the other, unless he be possessed of consummate genius. A Michael Angelo may devote himself with impunity—nay, even with success—to half-a-dozen different arts and sciences; but it is not given to every man "to wear the armour of Achilles." The versatility of a man of great genius will prove the source of ruin and

destruction to men of more moderate abilities who may be unwise enough to struggle after it. Thus it not unfrequently happens that he who, by devoting his entire attention to one single object, might have attained, if not fame, at least a fair and enduring reputation, may, by frittering away his talents on half-a-dozen different objects, wholly lose the applause that might have attached to him through steadfast devotion to one, and may become, as has been the case with Cumberland, the mere shadow of a name.

To nine readers out of every ten of the present day it is probable that the name which stands at the head of this chapter is almost wholly unknown, while in the minds of at least half the remainder it will simply arouse vague and cloudy visions of a figure in a bag wig and sword, mixed up in some half-intelligible way with Johnson and the men of his era. Yet it is hardly fifty years ago since the announcement of his name threw James Smith ("Mr. Smith the poet") into a flutter of delight only equalled by that with which the young Victor Hugo received the visit of the veteran poet of his youth, Chateaubriand. Richard Cumberland forms, indeed, one of the great connecting links between the last and the present centuries; and those who know him, though only at second-hand, can (like Mr. Thackeray with the old friend whom he mentions at the beginning of his lecture on the reign of George I.) "travel back for seven score years of time; have glimpses of Brummell, Selwyn, Chesterfield, and the men of pleasure; of Walpole and Conway; of Johnson, Reynolds, Goldsmith; of North, Chatham, Newcastle; of the fair maids of honour of George II.'s court; and of the German retainers of George I."—nay, they may even go back farther still, and, by

dwelling on the founder of the family, obtain glimpses of the latter half of the seventeenth century, in the person of that Dr. Cumberland who was made Bishop of Peterborough in 1691; or be admitted to the literary quarrels of Pope, Swift, and their clique, in the person of that maternal grandfather of our playwright, who was that Dr. Bentley whom Swift hitched into the "Battle of the Books," and whom Pope impaled for all posterity as "slashing Bentley" side by side with the less known, though equally ill-used, commentator, "piddling Tibbald."

We have but little concern in this place with Cumberland's ancestors. His connexion with Bentley is, however, worthy of note, as well on account of the doctor's personal distinction as on that of his assumption of the charge of his grandson's education. Cumberland had, indeed, a certain claim upon Bentley, seeing that he was born in his house—the master's lodge of Trinity College, Cambridge—*inter silvas Academi*, as he says in his characteristically pedantic way. For the first six years of his life, his family spent their time pretty equally divided between Cambridge and his father's living of Stanwick. In his poem of "Retrospection," published many years afterwards, he gives a very touching picture of the venerable scholar—

At his desk,  
Beside his garden window, deep in thought,  
With books embay'd;

and tells his readers how he ran to him "unaided," and how the old man, closing

"The page of ancient lore, that offer'd no amusement to his sight," sought among his shelves for books of prints, "to gratify an idle boy."

The idleness was not, however, to last very long. At the end of the six years Cumberland was sent to the grammar-school of Bury St. Edmund's, where he acquired the groundwork of his education, and varied a little work with a great deal of idleness. The under-master at Bury was a good, easy kind of man, who allowed his pupils to work or play, as best suited their inclinations, he meanwhile sitting by in "a plaid dressing-gown and night-cap." After a while Kinsman, the head-master, awoke to the responsibility he was neglecting, and sent for Cumberland into the upper school, when he addressed him in feeling terms on his idleness. Stung by the reproof, and by the fact that he was really the lowest, though not the youngest, boy in the school, he began to work to recover his lost ground; but just at this time he was seized with a severe illness. The tender nursing of his mother brought him round after a time, and he was on his recovery moved into Kinsman's house, where surrounded by a better class of boys, and stimulated to exertion by all reasonable inducements, he worked well, and speedily assumed a high place in the school, which he never afterwards lost. With his usual tediousness and prolixity, he has related the whole matter in his autobiography; and he adds the important information that about this time he made his first attempt at English verse. He has preserved some fragments of this very juvenile performance; but it would be difficult to discover in them a trace of genius, except, indeed, in one place, where the exigencies of rhyme have forced him into offering a beautiful specimen of that art of sinking which Pope satirized so pleasantly. He tells his readers that his mother was in the habit of quoting it as a specimen of

the style he ought most to avoid ; a similar reason may be given for its insertion here :—

Here they weave cables, there they mainmasts form ;  
Here they forge anchors, *useful in a storm.*

These juvenile efforts were not destined to be submitted to the criticism of “slashing Bentley.” The Master of Trinity had been taken to his rest at last—controversies were over for him—criticism and scholarship were no longer matters of moment ; while for Cumberland’s family there were henceforward no more pleasant visits to Cambridge, or friendly encounters with that learned and brilliant circle of which Bentley had so long been the acknowledged centre. Their home for a long time to come was the paternal living of Stanwick, in Northamptonshire ; a quiet and rather dull parsonage-house near to the church, which, says Cumberland, “is esteemed one of the most beautiful models in that style of architecture in the kingdom.” The description is true as far as it goes, but it falls far short of the reality. Stanwick possesses a church of singular beauty and picturesqueness, very ancient in date, and having one of the finest octagonal spires of late Decorated work in England. The reverend head of the family would not leave well alone, however ; for he added “a very handsome clock, and ornamented the chancel with a railing, screen, and entablature upon three-quarter columns, with a singing-gallery at the west end ; a set of alterations which were in existence until very recently—if they are not extant even now—as witnesses of the taste and wisdom of our ancestors in matters of ecclesiastical architecture. But though his notions of mediævalism may not have been very orthodox, his character was blameless and

his usefulness unquestionable. He was in the commission of the peace; but, like a good many other rural justices, he knew no law. He did not, however, hide his ignorance under an affectation of severity, but more frequently occupied himself in reconciling litigious disputants by means of his kitchen and cellar than by references to "Blackstone" or "Coke upon Littleton." He was no ascetic in his views of clerical duty, though he fulfilled them as well as most clergymen of his time. In his youth he had kept horses and ridden matches at Newmarket. In his later days he abandoned this, as inconsistent with his clerical position, but he still rode well to hounds, and shared a pack of harriers with some gentlemen in the neighbourhood. In this sport Richard took his part in his holidays, and became, according to his own account, a bold and skilful rider at a very early age.

All his time was not, however, taken up with pleasure of this kind, even during his holidays. His mother about this period began to form his taste in poetry, and certainly chose for this purpose the wisest plan that could be invented. Night after night he read aloud the best scenes of Shakespeare, whose works she understood and admired. She inherited her father's talent for annotation, and by it she aided her son in his appreciation of the national poet. The father shared in the enjoyments of these evenings; and Richard has left a very pleasant picture of the happy family group—the mother learned, wise, and amiable, occupied in the instruction of her eager and affectionate pupil, while the father sits by, placid and approving, "his countenance never marked but with the traces of his indelible and hereditary benevolence." The effect of these evenings on the mind of the lad was

precisely what might have been expected. He could at no time have been fairly called a brilliant genius, but he had what often serves very effectually in the stead of genius—a thorough appreciation of genius in others.

From Bury, Cumberland was, shortly after Bentley's death, removed to Westminster, then under Dr. Nichols. The lad went through the usual series of schoolboy scrapes, which are recorded in his autobiography at length, for the information of the curious in such matters; but, at this distance of time, there is nothing in them of sufficient importance to detain us, but one sentence of his autobiography—perhaps one of the most long-winded books in English literature—may serve to show what manner of boy Richard Cumberland was. “I sate down, however,” he says, “with ardour to my school-business, and also to my private studies, and I soon perceived that I had now no discouragements to contend with in my attempts at composition, for the very first exercise in Latin verse which I gave in gained the candid approbation of the master, and from that moment I acquired a degree of confidence in myself that gave vigour to my exertions: and though I bear all possible respect and gratitude to the memory of that kind friend of my youth, whose rigour was only the effect of anxiety for my well doing, yet I cannot look back to this period of my education without acknowledging the advantages I experienced in being thus transplanted to Westminster, where to attempt was to succeed, and placed under a master, whose principle it evidently was to cherish every spark of genius which he could discover in his scholars, and who seemed determined so to exercise his authority that our best motives for obeying him

should spring from the affection that we entertained for him." Kinsman, he adds, knew how to make his boys scholars, but Dr. Nichols had the art of making his scholars gentlemen. The rebellion of 1745 interrupted the tranquillity of school-life; and, on his return from school for his holidays, young Cumberland found an addition to the inhabitants of the quiet parsonage of Stanwick in the person of "the Hon. Mrs. Wentworth, grandmother of the Marquis of Rockingham," who, fearing lest the loyalty of her house to the reigning sovereign might expose her to pillage, had fled from Harrowden to take refuge with the parson of Stanwick. He was not to be readily frightened from his principles, and exerted himself valiantly in the Hanoverian cause. He raised in his parish two companies for the regiment then enrolling under the Earl of Halifax, and marched them to Nottingham in person. After a time the young captain went back to school—not with the most agreeable environments. He boarded in the house of an uncle in Peter Street, Westminster, where, though he was not unkindly treated, he became a prey to *ennui*, from the dulness and poverty of the domestic arrangements. One consolation, however, he found in being allowed occasionally to visit the theatre. The stage was just beginning to revive from its lethargy; Garrick and his company—including Quin, Mrs. Cibber, and Mrs. Pritchard—being the great attractions. Thanks to Leigh Hunt, who has quoted Cumberland's description of the impression produced upon him by the great actor at length, nearly all who care for such things know the state of mind produced by this first experience of the real dramatic art—how, "when little Garrick, young and light, and alive in every muscle

and in every feature, came bounding on the stage, and pointing at the wittol Altamont (Ryan) and heavy-paced Horatio (Quin)—heavens what a transition!—it seemed as if a whole century had been swept over in the course of a single scene.” The spectator, who had been listening to the “dignified elocution” of Quin, saw in a moment the traditions of a century swept away, and a new order of things, bright, luminous, and natural, introduced. This visit was doubtless not without its influence in directing the nascent powers of Cumberland towards that stage on which he was destined to reap his greatest successes. Not yet, however, was he to begin his theatrical labours.

The *cacoëthes scribendi* was beginning to break out, and the lad began to cheer his solitude with literature, but with no view to the stage. He has preserved a sample of these *juvenilia*—a translation in blank verse of Virgil’s description of the plague amongst the cattle, from the Georgics—rather tame in itself, but still interesting as pointing to the future direction of his life.

The death of a favourite sister brought about a change in the family arrangements, the immediate consequence of which was the removal of Cumberland from Westminster, and his entrance at Cambridge. He was very young—only in his fourteenth year indeed—and would undoubtedly have been improved by another year or two of school, but his father’s determination was taken, and to Trinity he went. He worked hard at Cambridge, lived sparingly, and wound up his undergraduateship by taking honours at an unusually early age. His success on this occasion was followed by an attack of rheumatic fever which made a prisoner of him for six months, and which, as

is not unusual in the case of that disease, left its mark upon him during the whole of his after-life.

About this time Mason (then Mr. Mason of Pembroke, better known afterwards by his friendship with Walpole) published his "Elfrida," "a tragedy after the manner of the Greeks," and completely converted Cumberland to his theories of poetry. Of course an ardent admirer soon develops into an imitator, and the boyish wrangler testified his admiration by writing an entire drama, of which "Caractacus" was the hero, and bards and Druids were the chorus, for whom the author says that he wrote "Odes in the manner of Elfrida"—a performance of which it is gratifying to find no trace now left.

An event which changed the whole course of Cumberland's life for many years to come happened about this time. A general election drew on, and the county of Northampton was hotly contested by the great rival parties in the state. The parson of Stanwick gave his support to the Whigs, and worked vigorously though unsuccessfully in their favour. Lord Halifax, then Lord Lieutenant of the county, noted this exhibition of zeal, and pressed his services. Personal favours were rigidly declined, but offers of kindness having the son of the house for their object were more willingly received. The result of the negotiations was the offer of a private secretaryship for the lad, which in spite of his secluded habits and love of study he accepted. Cumberland affects in his later life to repent this change in his prospects; but it appears exceedingly doubtful if anything better could readily have been found, or anything offering upon such easy terms that prospect of a career which all men desire, but so few obtain.

After a short stay with some relatives at York, Cumberland returned to Cambridge, to try his chance for a fellowship of his college. The usual rule was that those distinctions could only be conferred on a B.A. of at least three years' standing ; but in his case the law was set aside, and he, though only in his second year, was allowed to compete. With his accustomed air of self-satisfaction, he affects to believe that the reason for this piece of favouritism is to be found in his superior scholarship ; but it is far more probable that his relationship to Bentley was the principal cause. He began, however, to read for his examination in earnest, when a summons came from Lord Halifax to go immediately to London and commence his duties. He went accordingly ; and having waited on his patron, established himself in a lodging in Downing Street which had been taken for him. There was nothing very interesting or instructive in his work, and it is not to be wondered at that before long he began to wish himself back again in his quiet rooms at Cambridge. Halifax was kind enough to him, but it is not difficult to see that the lad found his protector rather different in manner from the friend he had known him in the country. At last the recess came. Lord Halifax went down into Northampton, and Cumberland to Cambridge, where he went through the usual processes, and was elected fellow of his college in due course. A certain Dr. Mason—a worthy man, but eccentric and dirty to an unusual degree—opposed the innovation violently, and did all he could to hinder his promotion. When he had succeeded, however, he waited on the electing seniors in the usual course to return thanks ; but upon presenting himself to Mason, he told him plainly “that he owed him no

thanks, for he had opposed his election as much as he was able," because he disliked innovation, and thought the change unfair to the other candidates. Of the examination for this fellowship, Cumberland gives a very curious account. He had to call upon all the fellows of the college in turn—last of all upon the Master, whom he found, not in his library, but in a chamber upstairs, "encompassed with large folding screens and over a great fire, though the weather was then uncommonly warm." The Master—Smith—examined him very strictly on matters of ancient history, and then gave him "a sheet of paper written through in Greek with his own hand," which he ordered him to turn either into Latin or into English. For the performance of this task he was shown into a room furnished with a table, a single chair and the materials for writing. Other exercises were given to him, all of which he performed in this room, which strangely enough was the room in which he was born. The ideas to which this fact gave rise he embodied in his Latin verses, and he allows his readers to understand that it was mainly to this fact that he was indebted for his success.

Concerning his life with Lord Halifax he has but little to say. It must have been dreary and commonplace enough, since so trivial an incident as his finding a quotation for Lord Halifax is made a peg on which to hang a page of Latin quotation, and two of a watery rhyming translation. His acquaintances, chiefly men whose reputations have died with themselves, also form subjects for a great deal of gossip; and at another time he tells his family how, in that "busy idleness" in which he was so proficient, he employed himself in collecting materials out of the

“History of India” for the epic on which he designed his fame to rest. Happily, he abandoned the notion before going very far with it; nevertheless, some half-dozen pages of fragments remain to prove that their author was not designed by nature for an epic poet.

A gentleman who could imagine that he was likely to “climb the steep where fame’s proud temple shines afar” by such lines as the following must have been very far gone:—

Gama the first on bold discovery bent,  
With prow still pointing to the further pole,  
Skirted Caffraria, till the welcome Cape,  
Thence call’d of *Hope*, but not to Asia’s sons—  
Spoke the long coast exhausted; still ‘twas Hope  
Not victory; Nature in one effort foil’d,  
Still kept the contest doubtful and enraged  
Roused all the elements to war.

In the course of time Lady Halifax died, and the dulness of Cumberland’s position was considerably increased in consequence. At last, when it had grown almost insupportable, his father managed to effect an exchange with the vicar of Fulham, to which place he removed from Stanwick. The Bishop of London, Sherlock, who was then in almost the last stage of decrepitude, treated the new-comer with great kindness, and before his death gave him a small prebend in St. Paul’s.

His family being thus brought within reach, Cumberland was frequently at Fulham, and by this means was introduced to the notorious Bubb Dodington, afterwards Lord Melcombe, who had a villa in the adjoining parish of Hammersmith. It is not very easy to understand how a man who, like Cumberland, boasted in after-life of his piety and spotless morals,

should pride himself on his friendship with a sensual reprobate like Dodington; but—whether from sincere though mistaken admiration, or from a snobbish worship of wealth, is not very clear—he does so pride himself, and devotes many pages of good type to celebrating his intimacy. Halifax encouraged it by all means in his power, since he was intriguing for promotion. At last came a breach. Halifax quarrelled with the Duke of Newcastle, threw up his place, and detached himself from the administration. Dodington went to his country seat, and Cumberland, the ex-secretary of an ex-statesman, followed him. A gay party filled the halls of Eastbury all the summer, and Dodington showed himself off to admiration. He may be judged pretty fairly from his habits; and, indeed, it is not unamusing to read of his gorgeous tastes in matters of upholstery and decoration, and of the meanness which, nevertheless, characterized some of his splendours. While he himself was never to be approached save through a suite of rooms “adorned with sculptures,” while he never rode save in a coach gilded and carved like that of the Lord Mayor, and drawn by six unwieldy Flanders mares; his state bedroom was carpeted with gold and silver embroidery, which, on examination, proved to be made of old coats, waistcoats, and breeches; and his walls, instead of pictures, were decorated with immense patches of gilt leather shaped into bugle-horns and mounted upon hangings of crimson velvet. To atone for the incongruous arrangements of his house, he never allowed himself to be seen except in dresses of the most costly and glaring description, laced and ruffled to a wonderful extent.

Dodington is acknowledged to have been of humble

birth, but he was by no means insensible to the charms of rank and fortune. Walpole was a favourite subject for his panegyric; so also were Chesterfield, Winnington, Pultney, and Fox, who accepted his admiration with considerable tolerance. Lord Bute was, however, his idol. To him Dodington paid perpetual court, for which he was at last rewarded with a coronet. Of his literary tastes Cumberland is loud in praise. His knowledge of Tacitus was minute and correct; while his wit, though often coarse, was always ready. His admirer admits, however, that he was accustomed to book his good things, and to prepare himself for his encounter with his friends by a course of his private jest-book. If his wit were ready and brilliant, his taste was coarse and even brutal. He would entertain his lady visitors by reading aloud, and for this purpose his favourite works were "Jonathan Wild" and the coarser scenes from Shakespeare, all of which he delivered with infinite gusto. Glover, the author of "Leonidas" and "Medea," was, however, a great friend; and he would sometimes vary his readings by extracts from the works of that writer, whom he professed greatly to admire. One evening Cumberland relates that he devoted himself to reading a poem of some four hundred lines which our fellow of Trinity had composed, partly in honour of his host, and partly to offer consolation to Lord Halifax on his retirement from office. The author was too modest to hear his own work read aloud, or rather to be seen so occupied, and therefore concealed himself in the next room, where he could hear without being seen, and be gratified with Dodington's compliments without being under the necessity of deprecating them.

His interests at Cambridge did not suffer all this

time. His friends did not forget him, nor did the authorities lose sight of his merits. A lay-fellowship became vacant, whereupon he was put in competition for it, and, by "the unabated kindness of the masters and seniors," he was "honoured with that last and most distinguished mark of their favour and protection." He did not continue long to enjoy the dignity and emoluments of this position, but ceased at an early period to court academical honours, in favour of a matrimonial speculation. About this time he married the daughter of a Mr. Ridge—a Northamptonshire neighbour—having previously secured, through the patronage of Lord Halifax, a public office as Crown Agent for the Province of Nova Scotia. Henceforward, therefore, his life is divorced from the university, and he begins his career as a dramatist.

The first attempt of Cumberland in the dramatic art was the production of a tragedy on a subject taken from Middleton's "Life of Cicero," then just published. "The Banishment of Cicero," in five acts, was presented by Lord Halifax to Garrick; but the little manager was too wise to risk his reputation by the production of a tragedy such as this. He was certainly under considerable obligations to Halifax, and would without doubt have been glad to oblige so powerful a nobleman, had it been possible; but it is evident, in spite of Cumberland's attempts to disguise the fact, that the play was really too bad for representation. In the first place, the subject was most unhappy. Cicero is not a character for whom the play-going public are at any time likely to care, and his banishment is an exceedingly trivial matter to form the catastrophe of a long five-act tragedy. However, the author was proud of his bantling, and liked not the idea of the

world losing so much instruction and amusement as he thought his tragedy likely to offer. It was published, therefore, but, greatly to his credit, with no preface in explanation of the circumstances under which Garrick had refused it. Copies were sent to the Primate and to Warburton, the latter of whom returned a courteous note of thanks, in which he assures Cumberland that his "very fine dramatic poem is (like Mr. Mason's) much too good for a prostitute stage." What Warburton meant by his phrases of flattery probably he himself best knew, but there is an odd "sour-grapes" flavour about his consolation, which could not have been very pleasant to Cumberland, in spite of the pride with which he publishes the letter. The play is not very easy to get at, but those who do attempt to read it are more likely to "sleep o'er Cato's drowsy theme" than to agree with the author in his opinion that though "inaccuracies may be discovered here and there as a dramatic poem, for the closet it will bear examination." His fault, indeed, is never a want of appreciation of his own merits. Whatever blame may attach to him on other grounds, none can on this; and in order to prove his case he does not hesitate to assume the most difficult position that can be devised—that of censor and critic of his own works. He has executed his task with as much impartiality as could be expected, with the usual, and indeed necessary result, that of disgusting his readers with his vanity and of irritating them by his incompetency.

Political changes interfered very speedily with Cumberland's dramatic career. The king, George II., died in 1760, and, of course, a new order in political affairs was inaugurated. Lord Bute, into whose

hands the entire care and responsibilities of the State had now fallen, was chief dispenser of favour and promotion. Halifax speedily found, with Dodington, the good effects of the court they had paid to that nobleman for the last few years. Dodington became Lord Melcombe—a barren honour, however, which died with him; and Halifax was rewarded for his fidelity by promotion from his office of First Lord of Trade and Plantations, which he had reassumed some time before, to that of Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. Cumberland, who retained still his office of secretary, succeeded in obtaining a chaplaincy for his father, and went out with Halifax, entrusted with the management of all his most private affairs. Over him, as chief secretary, was Gerard Hamilton, who had but little of the Lord-Lieutenant's favour. He was an able man of business, though of small parliamentary reputation (he was better known by the nickname of Single-Speech Hamilton than by his own) but he never succeeded in gaining the confidence of Halifax. The consequence was, that Cumberland, though holding only the minor post of Ulster secretary, was in fact rendered responsible for nearly or quite everything that was done in the secretary's department. The cares of the author intruded themselves, however, from time to time upon the duties of the politician, and thus it came to pass that he discovered soon after his arrival in Dublin that his "Banishment of Cicero," which had been published in quarto, "in a handsome type," by "Mr. J. Walter, of Charing Cross," had been pirated by the notorious George Faulkner of Dublin. This was that Faulkner whom Foote afterwards caricatured to his face, and who, after laughing at the burlesque, brought his satirist into

a court of law and made him pay roundly for his freedom.

Halifax did not long administer the affairs of Ireland, but in the time that he was thus occupied he contrived to endear himself to the people in many ways. The speech which he delivered at the opening of the session was infinitely applauded, though, by the way, Cumberland contrives to insinuate that it owed much of its success to the pen of Hamilton, who was called in to revise it before it was spoken. Early in his administration a project for increasing the revenues of the Lord-Lieutenant passed the Irish Parliament. Halifax gave his assent to the measure, so far as his successors were concerned, but he positively refused to receive any benefit from it for himself. Such unusually disinterested conduct in an English Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland had its reward in the love and applause of the people, which showed itself to a rather embarrassing extent at his departure. On that day the shore was thronged by thousands of people, and the bay covered with boats, all containing crowds assembled to pay him the last honours in their power. Before he left he contrived to reward one faithful adherent. His chaplain, Cumberland's father, obtained from his influence the Irish bishopric of Clonfert. The position, though elevated, was not of extraordinary dignity or emolument, but the ex-rector of Stanwick did more honour to his office than the office did to him. He modelled his life upon the highest type of Christian charity and virtue, devoted himself utterly and entirely to the duties of his office, and gained the love of all classes in his diocese, whether Protestant or Roman Catholic. The poor almost worshipped him, and his son records with justifiable pride how, on one

occasion, a wild Irish lad walked from Clonfert to Dublin solely to obtain his blessing. Another story, which is equally to his honour, is also told by his son. Meeting the Catholic priest of the parish one day, the good bishop remarked upon the sorry condition of his horse. "Truly, my good lord," replied the priest, "the beast himself is but an ugly garron, and whereby I have no provender to spare him, mightily out of heart, as I may truly say; but your lordship must think a poor priest like me has a mighty deal of work and very little pay." "Why, then, brother," said the bishop, "'tis fit that I, who have the advantage of you in both respects, should mount you on a better horse, and furnish you with provision to maintain him." This parley with the priest, his son goes on to say passed in the very hay-field where the bishop's people were at work. Orders were instantly given for a stack of hay to be made at the priest's cabin, and in a few days after a steady horse was purchased and presented to him." His virtues and talents gained still further appreciation; in the course of a short time he was promoted from Clonfert to Kilmore, and there settling down, he scarcely quitted his diocese for the rest of his life.

Cumberland's own rewards were not great. He received, as became an honourable man, no presents whatever; and except from the fees upon wool-licences which were attached to his office, and were worth about 300*l.* a year, he scarcely cleared his extraordinary expenses. Towards the close of the session Halifax expressed his wish to mark his appreciation of his services, and by way of doing so offered to obtain for him the title of baronet—an honour which Cumberland, with remarkable good sense, instantly declined.

The Lord-Lieutenant was not particularly gratified by this refusal, but he did not withdraw his countenance from him altogether, though he speedily made him feel the weight of his displeasure. An opportunity for promotion was not long in offering itself, by the vacating of the office of Under-Secretary of State. For this he applied, but he was curtly refused, with the information "that he was not fit for every situation." The deficiency alleged was that he could not speak French, but this was merely an excuse. He knew quite enough of the language for the duties of the office; but in truth he was out of favour, and therefore, in his own words, "had he possessed the eloquence and perfection of Voltaire himself in that language, he would not have been a step nearer to the office in question." Thus repulsed in favour of an unknown man—a Mr. Sedgewicke—Cumberland withdrew from his patron, and applied for the office which his rival had just vacated. The salary was but two hundred a year, and Halifax remonstrated with him with some severity; but he adhered to his purpose, and obtained the paltry place at the price of Lord Halifax's perpetual displeasure.

Thus returned to England, and established after eleven years with a petty place under government, Cumberland found time for other studies and other labours than those which had previously occupied him. Comic opera was the order of the day on the stage, and Bickerstaff was at the head of this school of composition. His two works, "Love in a Village" and "The Maid of the Mill," having been very successful, Cumberland was stimulated to attempt something of the same kind, and produced accordingly what he very appropriately styles "a thing in three acts," which

he named “The Summer’s Tale.” It was miserably dull and tedious; but being merely the vehicle for music, and not greatly regarded, it was moderately successful. Abel supplied the overture; Bach, Dr. Arne, and Dr. Arnold the music to the songs; and Beard, Shuter, and Miss Brent—all then in high favour—filled the principal characters.

His friends were not particularly struck by this, his first success. On leaving the theatre one day he met an old acquaintance, with whom he entered into conversation, and who told him frankly that he could never achieve a reputation by compiling the nonsense which usually goes to the formation of an opera. He wound up his arguments by suggesting that he should devote himself to writing comedies, by which both fame and money might be gained; and on this hint Cumberland had the good sense to act. In the following summer, as soon as he was released from his duties at the Board of Trade, he set out on a visit to his father, whom he found comfortably settled at Clonfert, and with whom he stayed for some little time, returning to England in the autumn. His time had not been wasted in this long recess; for in the course of the winter he produced his first comedy, “The Brothers,” at Covent Garden. It was very fairly received, and appears to have fixed the destiny of its author, inasmuch as from this time we have more of the gestation and production of new comedies than of anything else. This play of Cumberland’s can hardly be called his first, seeing he had already produced a tragedy for the benefit of the trunk-makers, and an opera which had lived nine nights; but it was assuredly his first attempt in the style in which he was to gain his greatest successes, and in which he was to reign

unquestioned with supremacy for many years to come. Those who have the courage to disinter it from the thousand-and-one works of the same class—successful and unsuccessful—which supplied the stage a century ago, will find little to praise in it more than is to be found in hundreds of other comedies which have long been forgotten. The characters are all old and conventional, the humour is of the stage, stagey, and the dialogue inexpressibly tedious. Mrs. Inchbald, it is but fair to say, however, is not of this opinion, though she carefully enshrines her opinions in the decisions of other people. ““The Brothers,”” she says, “is acknowledged by all critics to be a very good play.””

If this play did nothing else, it had one very good effect—it produced a reconciliation between Cumberland and Garrick, who had not been upon the best of terms since the rejection of the “Banishment of Cicero.” This was brought about by means of a simple and graceful allusion in the epilogue. The play over, Mr. Yates stepped forward to deliver it, in accordance with the kindly but disused practice of the time, and began,—

Who but hath seen the celebrated strife,  
Where Reynolds calls the canvas into life ;  
And 'twixt the Tragic and the Comic Muse,  
Courted of both, and dubious where to choose,  
Th' immortal actor stands—

“The immortal actor” was taken somewhat by surprise; but Garrick, with all his good qualities—and they were not few—was of all men the most open to flattery. In this instance it was so delicately applied, and so palpably sincere—for Cumberland could not know, though he might guess, that he would be present—that it could not fail of its desired effect. Mr. Fitzherbert, whose

intimacy with Garrick has preserved his name, was with him in the box, and came round straightway "to assure Mr. Cumberland of the gratification he had afforded to Mr. Garrick." An intimacy, broken only by death, thus commenced. The actor visited the dramatist in Queen Anne Street, and the latter returned his attentions both at his house at Hampton, in Southampton Street, and later in the house on the Adelphi Terrace where Garrick spent the closing years of his life.

Somewhere about this time he came into collision with Sheridan. With an inexplicable want of taste, he could never be brought to see, or at all events to acknowledge, the genius of his immortal rival, Sheridan. He is said even to have sat through a representation of the "School for Scandal" without a smile, and to have inquired what his friends could see to laugh at in it. He had not long before produced a tragedy, the "Battle of Hastings," which has long been consigned to the limbo of forgotten works, and Sheridan did not forget this tragedy when Cumberland's behaviour at his comedy was reported to him. "Not laugh at my comedy!" said he; "somewhat ungracious, to say the least, for I laughed at his tragedy the other night from beginning to end." The retort was severe, but a more terrible revenge was in store. The immortal "Critic" came out in 1779, and the world there saw Cumberland at full length in the character of Sir Fretful Plagiary. The resemblance was perfect; one of his sons was the first to recognize it, and it soon became the talk of the town. It is only fair to add, however, that there is another account which states that the provocation was not a personal, but a political one, and this, for Sheridan's sake, one would rather accept. In a farce by

Cumberland called, the "Note of Hand, or a Trip to Newmarket," there is a certain amount of satire levelled at the Duke of Devonshire, Charles Fox, and other heads of that political party to which Sheridan was attached, and tradition says that Sir Fretful was designed as a retaliation. Whichever be the true version of the story, it is certain that the satire was aimed at Cumberland, and equally certain that it was most bitterly felt. The injury rankled in his mind, and in spite of the attempts to disguise it, it was a sore point even a quarter of a century after. What made it worse was probably the dreadful truth of the name given by Sheridan to his victim. Cumberland was as a matter of fact a plagiarist of the first water, and Mudford in his "Critical Examination of the works of Richard Cumberland," devotes several pages to an exposure of the gross plagiarisms with which the "Battle of Hastings" abounds. An opera—"Calypso"—which he produced shortly afterwards was also described as "a thing of shreds and patches stolen from all sources."

The work by which Cumberland is best known was next set upon the stocks. The usual annual visit to his father at Clonfert was occupied by the composition of the "West Indian," which, with a minuteness that would be amusing were it not tedious, he has told the world, was planned and written in a little closet at the back of the palace, which had no other prospect than that of a turf stack with which it was almost in contact. On his return to England, he submitted the manuscript of the "West Indian" to the friendly criticism of Garrick, who gave him a number of exceedingly valuable hints as to the conduct of his plot, the arrangement of his scenes, and the like, and who bestowed a great deal of

attention on the arrangements for the rehearsal and cast of the play. The author's expectations were not high—indeed, he says that he offered to resign the profits of his work to Garrick, if he would give him a certain picture which hung over his chimney-piece in Southampton Street—a copy of a Holy Family by Andrea del Sarto—and the bargain would have been completed had not the picture been a gift from Lord Baltimore to the manager. Public curiosity had been aroused, and a good deal of hostility excited by the title of the new piece. The West Indians of London came down to the theatre on the first night in great force, disposed to resent any attack of the author on their class in an exceedingly summary manner. Their temper manifested itself the moment the prologue commenced, and the first four lines were spoken in the midst of such a tremendous uproar that not a word could be heard. Garrick grew painfully agitated; but the cry came for the speaker to recommence. He did so amidst a sulky kind of attention, and the audience, calmed a little by the promise that the hero should discover "some emanations of a noble mind," waited for the evolution of the plot and the development of the character with more patience than had at first been anticipated. The galleryful of Irish servants was conciliated by the promise of an Irishman in the piece who should differ in some respects from the conventional stage Irishman, who had hitherto "been treated," to use Cumberland's words, only "with kicks and cuffs," and prepared itself for lusty applause. The play opened amidst mingled silence of one party and cheering of another; but when the curtain dropped, the enthusiasm was unanimous, and the success of the piece was determined. To the reader of the present

day it seems tame enough. Its great fault is its prolixity. The speeches are very long and in several cases they hinder rather than help on the action. Thus, for example, in the first act the audience are kept for some little time whilst two of the characters exchange ideas as to the literary merits of Sterne—an interesting subject, and one on which Cumberland's ideas at a proper time would doubtless be valuable, but certainly not one for the sake of which it is worth while to arrest the course of a five-act comedy. As a matter of course the play abounds in bad grammar, one instance of which may suffice in this place—the word “*were*” in conversation is invariably replaced by “*was*;” thus, “Was I only a visitor?” “Was I to choose a pupil?” “You was brought up,” “You was about to join your regiment,” &c., &c. In spite of its faults, however, the play ran for eight-and-twenty nights without the help of an afterpiece; the author's night produced a great sum, and he sold the copyright besides for 150*l.* The bookseller who bought it made no bad bargain. He was accustomed to boast in later days that he had sold no less than 12,000 copies—a number which would leave him a tolerable margin of profit.

The critics abused the piece in but few instances. Chiefly through Garrick's influence, they were very merciful as a rule; but the little manager's sense of humour prepared a wholesome antidote to the author's vanity. Calling upon him one morning, he found Garrick busy reading the St. James's evening paper. “Here, here,” he cried, immediately on seeing Cumberland, “if your skin is less thick than a rhinoceros's hide, egad, here is that will cut you to the bone. This is a terrible fellow; I wonder who it can be!” He began apparently reading from the paper a violent attack

upon the play, no one feature of which was spared, character, diction, and plot being alike assailed. The miserable author wriggled in his chair under the torment, which was not lessened when Garrick laid down the paper and condoled for a while with him on the cruelty of the journalists. When he had sufficiently enjoyed his joke, he resumed his reading, cheering up the distressed dramatist as the criticism began to soften, until he closed his amusement with a really genuine panegyric, of which he was himself the writer, and which was contained in the paper from which he had apparently been reading. One hardly knows which to admire most—the wit of Garrick or the delicacy of his flattery and of his warnings. It was one of those things that only he could have done, and is one of the pleasantest proofs of the genuine amiability of his character.

New occupations now engrossed Cumberland for some little time. Bishop Lowth, in a pamphlet professedly against Warburton, had gone out of his way to attack Bentley, as a mere verbal critic, lamentably deficient in taste and in matters of elegant literature. Whatever opinion nineteenth-century readers may have of the critic who presumed to mutilate “*Paradise Lost*” under pretence of improving it, there can be no misapprehension of the feeling which led Cumberland to take up the cudgels in defence of his grandfather. He did not seek the task, but fulfilled what he deemed a sacred duty. Lowth had called Bentley—going back to Catullus for an appropriate epithet—*aut capri-mulgus aut fossor*; and though it is not very easy to see their exact appropriateness to a dead opponent in a literary controversy, they appear to have struck home, and to have stung Cumberland into the fiercest wrath.

The temper in which he entered upon the attack may be guessed from the fact that years after, when he described the whole affair, he used exceedingly strong language, accusing Lowth of "downright black-guardism," and of indulging in acrimonious censure, "until his lawn sleeves were bloody." His pamphlet had not the effect of procuring a recantation or an apology from Lowth; but he considers that he gained the victory in the matter, since the bishop made no attempt at defence, and even refused an offer to assist him made by a clergyman in his diocese. The relations who stood nearer to Bentley than Cumberland had declined the task of defending the illustrious Master of Trinity; but his own son was not above the meanness of accepting the reward. A certain Mr. Greaves—long a friend of Bentley—read the pamphlet, was infinitely delighted with it, and imagining that the author could be no other than the son of his old friend, sent him a letter of compliments, accompanied by a valuable present, both of which Mr. Bentley accepted.

Long after the matter had passed over, Cumberland wrote a very manly and sensible letter to his would-be benefactor, explaining the error, and reminding him of a somewhat similar interference with his good intentions years before, when the object of them was an undergraduate of Trinity. When Cumberland's vanity was not concerned, his conduct was, indeed, strictly that of a man of honour; and this incident of his life was destined to lead to another, which tested his principles even more severely, and which affords one of the most singular instances of the mutability of fortune that can well be imagined. While at breakfast one morning he was surprised by a visit from his cousin, the Reverend Decimus Reynolds (son of Bishop Rey-

nolds), whom he had never seen in his life before. The old gentleman, who in habit and address was conspicuously eccentric, gave no salutation ; but dived into his pocket, and producing a large roll of papers tied with whip-cord, begged Cumberland to read them. He, being just on the point of starting for Whitehall, asked what they were, and having been told that they contained his visitor's will, naturally required further explanations, whereupon Reynolds explained, in a disjointed sort of sentence, that he had made Cumberland, his heir twenty years before, and that he had now come to London expressly to put the title-deeds of his property in his hands, and to assign everything to him by a deed of gift. The surprise of Cumberland and his wife may easily be imagined, as well as the doubt that seized them of the sanity of their visitor. However, after a while he composed himself, and set to work to explain matters. The end of the negotiation was the drawing up of a deed of gift, containing a clause enabling the donor to resume possession at any time should he desire it,—though, by the way, this clause was inserted against his will. Mr. Reynolds signed the deed and departed to his home. Ten years of uninterrupted cordiality and friendship passed over, when one morning Cumberland received a visit from a nephew of Mr. Reynolds, demanding back the whole of the title-deeds. He received them precisely in the state in which they had been given to Cumberland, and the latter wrote to his would-be benefactor explaining what he had done, and delicately hinting that after ten years of cordial friendship he had not expected to be thus deprived of everything, but dwelling also on the fact that the insertion of the clause empowering the revocation was his own act. On the

whole, Cumberland appears to have acted in this matter with the greatest possible delicacy and good feeling, and to have proved that he, in his own words, "merited more kindness than he received." As for the conduct of Reynolds, it appears inexplicably foolish and childlike from first to last.

The author of the "West Indian" had now become a somewhat distinguished member of London society, and was accustomed to entertain a large and brilliant circle of friends at his house in Queen Anne Street; Johnson, Burke, Reynolds, Garrick, Soame Jenyns, and a host of others, were constant visitors, and all appear to have entertained a very high respect for their host. Johnson was particularly attached to "Cumbey," and his friendship was not diminished by the very high estimation in which he held his friend's wife, whose readiness to supply the doctor with unlimited cups of tea is commemorated in a well-known anecdote.<sup>1</sup> In a note of Boswell's he quotes from Johnson's letters to Mrs. Thrale the opinion expressed by "the great lexicographer" of "that learned, ingenious, and accomplished gentleman:" "the want of company," says Johnson, "is an inconvenience; but Mr. Cumberland is a million." Besides Johnson, Cumberland also made acquaintance about this time with Foote, through Garrick's introduction; and also came to know Goldsmith, of whom he has related a number of anecdotes of no great importance. Those that really deserve attention have been incorporated by Mr. Forster in his charming life of Goldsmith; and as that book is pro-

<sup>1</sup> His friendship was not enough, however, to induce him to contradict Tom Davies's amusing criticism of Cumberland, that "he lived upon *potted stories*, and that he made his way as Hannibal did, by vinegar; having begun by attacking people, particularly players."

bably in every reader's hand, it is unnecessary to repeat them here. His opinion of Goldsmith is, perhaps, of less importance than even his stories about him. The simple exterior and general quietude of the little poet led him to think less of his powers than they deserved ; but as he looks from the heights of an imaginary superiority upon the less conspicuous though more enduring genius of his friend, his criticisms become sometimes rather amusing.

The comparative failure of the next two or three of his works threw Cumberland's mind back upon the duties of his office ; and he took to those duties the more readily since the death of his former patron, Halifax, had opened the door to some promotion. Lord George Germain took his place in the Colonial Office, and for some time Cumberland, who knew nothing of his new chief, appeared to reconcile himself to a continuance in his subordinate office. Lord George commenced his official career by the assumption of a very frigid demeanour, but after a short time broke down the barriers he had raised, and invited Cumberland to visit him at his country house. He was afterwards provided, through the kind offices of the same nobleman, with a comfortable position in the post of Secretary to the Board of Trade—an office which he continued to hold until the dissolution of Lord North's administration, when the Board of Trade was abolished, much to the annoyance of Cumberland and of Gibbon, who was one of the commissioners. Both the historian and the dramatist had the same resource to fall back upon—their pens, which they, however, used with very different degrees of success.

Literary plans were, however, to be brought for a while to an abrupt termination. In the year 1780 he

gained through a secret channel, the nature of which there is now no means of discovering, intelligence of many things passing between the confidential agents of France and Spain in this country. Of the knowledge thus acquired he made a due and fitting use for the service of his own country, and a prospect appearing to open of a secret negotiation with the Minister Florida Blanca, the conduct of this affair was entrusted by the English government to Cumberland. He was directed to proceed to Lisbon, where he awaited with his wife and family the advices of the Abbé Hussey, chaplain to the King of Spain, who proceeded to Aranjuez, and communicated upon the state of affairs from that place. He was conveyed to Lisbon in a king's ship, and thence travelled through to Madrid. The detail of what he did and what he left undone is peculiarly uninteresting ; he has told it, nevertheless, at enormous length. The negotiation, after about a year spent in waiting the pleasure of the Spanish court, fell through, and Cumberland received a very peremptory letter from Lord Hillsborough, ordering his return. He prepared for departure accordingly, and just before leaving Madrid received from the Spanish government a very kindly recognition of the value of his services, and an offer of compensation for his trouble. Unfortunately, he did not avail himself of this liberality, and, as a result, found that the English government declined to honour his drafts, in spite of a promise from the Secretary of the Treasury. He was left, indeed, so completely destitute of funds, that on his arrival at Bayonne, on his way home, he would have been forced into a debtor's prison had he not fortunately been able to borrow a sum of 500*l.* from a fellow-traveller. It speaks very ill for the

English executive that on his return he was actually refused all compensation for his extraordinary expenses, and for the loss of a large amount of valuable time. The result to him was certainly most disastrous —entailing nearly total ruin, and depriving his family of their property, while forcing him to labour for his bread even more than heretofore. Of this disgraceful affair he speaks far more moderately than could be expected from so ill-used a man. He certainly laments the loss which he sustained, and the privations which that loss would entail, but he vents no reproaches and utters no insults against the authors of his misfortune, even though, as he says in one place, he was driven from Lord North's door by the servants. Cumberland received a small compensation for the loss of his office of Secretary to the Board of Trade, but his patrimony was so seriously diminished that he was compelled to retire to Tunbridge Wells, where he established himself modestly with his family.<sup>2</sup>

Shortly after his return from Spain he commenced that course of literary labour which was to fill the remainder of his life, by the publication of two small octavo volumes of anecdotes of eminent painters in Spain. This was succeeded by those essays under the

<sup>2</sup> There is some unexplained mystery about this matter. In his Memoirs and in his Will, as given by Mudford, Cumberland constantly speaks of himself as being the creditor of the English Government to a large extent, on account of this Spanish business; but letters are in existence which appear to prove that he received from the Crown a patent appointing him to the offices of Provost Marshal, Clerk of the Peace, and Clerk of the Crown to the Colony of South Carolina. These sinecure posts yielded him a large income for many years, and were at last sold by him for a considerable sum—apparently about 5000*l.* Be this as it may, however, Cumberland died a very poor man. His will was proved under 450*l.*

title of the “*Observer*,” on which chiefly rest his claims to a reputation for scholarship. Though they are now nearly forgotten, they had considerable reputation in their day, and Cumberland himself thought very highly of them. In one place, indeed, he congratulates himself that they had been incorporated in a collection of the British Essayists, and “may therefore be regarded as fairly enrolled among the standard classics of our native language.” They did not appear singly, as was the case with those of the founders of the art of English essay-writing, but when sufficient were accumulated to form a volume it was brought out. The quantity of space covered by these 152 essays is rather greater than that occupied by the “*Rambler*,” which consists of 208; but while Johnson received help from friends but rarely (only six pages of the whole being by other hands), and from books not at all, more than a third of the “*Observer*” is compiled or translated from the works of other writers. It is hardly fair, however, to institute comparisons between these two writers; while Cumberland was simply a man of ordinary capacity and considerable power of application, Johnson was a man of really unusual genius, and possessed of a wonderful power of execution.

Some of the “*Observers*” will, notwithstanding the general air of heaviness which pervades them, always be valuable to the scholar and the critic. His inquiries into the history of the Greek writers, especially into that of the comic poets, are perhaps his happiest efforts, and his translations from Aristophanes are not destitute of value. He was probably greatly indebted, though he has not acknowledged the fact, to the annotated copies of the authors whom he criticized, which had formerly been the property of his grandfather, Dr.

Bentley, and had come into the possession of Cumberland through his uncle. The “*Observers*” are always likely to be commended rather than read ; neither style nor subject is sufficiently attractive for this bustling nineteenth century. He has been rather scurvily treated of late years, his works being used as a quarry from which some “popular” authors have dug a great deal of good material without the smallest acknowledgment. An amusing instance of this “conveyance” occurred a few years ago. In one of the numbers of *Household Words*, shortly before that paper changed its name, appeared an article which has since been republished, in which the writer occupies himself by imagining the sort of treatment which would be dealt out to Shakespeare did his works appear now for the first time. The topic is treated pleasantly enough, but one of the numbers of the “*Observer*” contains the development of the same idea, not less skilfully worked out. The great defect of these papers is their execrable style. Cumberland had not the faintest notion of what constitutes good English. His sentences have no proper beginning, middle, or end. They are divided in a singularly arbitrary fashion into clauses, and there is frequently no apparent reason why one period should come to an end. If to this defect be added Cumberland’s frequent misuse of well-known words, and introduction of new ones, it will be easy to understand why his prose writings should have passed into oblivion. The remarkable feature of the matter is that Cumberland laboured all his life under the delusion that he wrote in a “simple, clear, harmonious style.”

From his retirement at Tunbridge Wells, Cumberland sent forth his tragedy of the “Carmelite,” which

being a little less dull than the "Battle of Hastings," and having the inestimable advantage of the support of Kemble and Mrs. Siddons, was performed with moderate success. Controversy, too, presented her attractions, and these our author could never resist. The Bishop of Llandaff, "one of the ablest scholars and finest writers in the kingdom," by Cumberland's own account, published a proposal for equalizing the revenues of the Church. Cumberland opposed the proposition in a pamphlet, to which the bishop deigned no reply. His opponent thereupon assumed that he "had the best of the argument," though possibly others may take a rather different view of the transaction. In the same way he addressed a pamphlet to Dr. Parr, with the somewhat boastful title of "Curtius rescued from the Gulf." To this also he obtained no reply, and probably had the same idea of the wisdom of the learned doctor as he had of that of the Bishop of Llandaff, who, he considers, "did a wiser thing in declining the controversy than in throwing out the occasion."

Cumberland produced one more comedy, "The Impostors," with indifferent success; and then, finding that the stage would none of him, he thought that he might find greater acceptance amongst the publishers. In the course of two or three years he produced a series of novels—"Arundel," "Henry," and "John de Lancaster." The first is a story in the Richardsonian manner, told in a series of letters; the second is modelled upon Fielding, from whom he borrowed his plan and the externals of his work; and the last, which appeared in 1809, was in the manner of the new school of romantic fiction. The three novels are all equally dull and unreal; their tediousness can only be imagined by those

who have attempted to read them. They give, indeed, painful evidence of failing powers, and of the numbing influence of advancing age. The strangest feature of them is their licentiousness. Cumberland was an eminently moral and religious personage. His friends record with admiration how he almost succeeded in converting the sceptical Samuel Foote on his death bed, and how, if he had but had a few weeks more in which to continue his pious exhortations, he would have turned that eighteenth-century Aristophanes into a "sad good Christian." Yet his novels are little more than imitations of Fielding and Smollett, and imitations too from which none of the grossness is expunged. "Henry" is particularly offensive in this way. There are half-a-dozen scenes almost, if not quite, as bad as anything in Mrs. Aphra Behn, and the objectionable stories are not made better by the rather ostentatious parade of virtue and morality in which they are enshrined.

The review of Cumberland's declining years is no pleasant task. He had set out with high hopes and noble ambitions; he sank ere his death into a drivelling egotist. By-and-by he began to fancy himself an epic poet, and produced a new version of the great tragedy of the Christian faith—a poem with the title of "Calvary," which a critic of the day generously placed on a level with "Paradise Lost." Afterwards, in conjunction with his friend Sir James Bland Burges, he brought forth another epic, the subject taken from the Old Testament, and the title "The Exodiad." It is very smooth, very fluent, and excessively tedious. From beginning to end there seems no trace of the genuine poetic fire; an observation which will apply with equal force to the earlier poem, "Calvary." They are

both exemplifications of the most monotonous commonplace, and prove, were any proof needed, the truth of the saying,

Mediocribus esse poetis  
Non dii, non homines, non concessere columnæ.

Not much more time was, however, left to the veteran dramatist for labour of any sort. Driven by stern necessity, he published his autobiography, by which, in spite of its faults, he will best be remembered ; and a few days before his death issued his poem of "Retrospection," the only one of his works which appears, to those who have no interest in him beyond a literary one, worthy in any degree of his fame. It begins with a solemn pathos, the effect of which is infinitely increased by the circumstances attending the publication :—

World, I have known thee long, and now the hour  
When I must part from thee is near at hand :

The end was, perhaps, nearer than he had thought. He was in London on business, and was staying in the house of a friend, when his mortal disease attacked him. A few days of suffering, and he had done with the world and its struggles, its joys and its griefs. He died peacefully and calmly on the 7th of May, 1811, and was buried on the 14th in Westminster Abbey, close to the spot where rests the body of his old and generous friend Garrick. The funeral-service was read over him by the Dean of Westminster, Dr. Vincent, with whom he had been a schoolfellow, and who had not forgotten their ancient friendship. The Dean delivered a panegyrical oration at the conclusion of the service, in which the poet received an ample measure of praise for his conduct in both public and

private capacities. Unhappily, however, the speaker selected for his eulogium those very points in Cumberland's character to which exception may most readily be taken ; such, for instance, as the freedom of his plays from profane oaths, and the purity of his novels both in moral and incidents. The only excuse which can be offered for this reckless misrepresentation is, that in all probability the venerable Dean had no personal acquaintance with the works of his friend, and that he had therefore been compelled to rely upon some not over-scrupulous intermediary, who had described the dead man not as he was, but as he desired to be thought.

It has been necessary in the preceding pages to rely to a considerable extent upon the autobiography which Cumberland himself drew up. In that work his merits and defects are alike conspicuous. There is a great air of frankness and sincerity about his tone ; but it is impossible to avoid an occasional suspicion that the writer has been tempted to gloss over and over-colour some events and some actions which, seen in the full light of truth, might have a rather different effect. With La Fontaine we may say,—

Je soupçonne fort une histoire  
Quand l'héros en est l'auteur ;  
L'amour propre et la vaine gloire  
Rendent souvent l'homme vanteur :  
On fait toujours si bien son compte  
Qu'on tire de l'honneur de tout ce qu'on raconte.

That his name will be remembered for any other reason than on account of his connexion with greater men, it would be folly to assert; yet, on the other hand, it cannot be denied that as a servant of the State he was eminently faithful, and exceedingly ill-

rewarded ; while his services to literature, though not, perhaps, enduring, were good and valuable in their time, and contained but little that even their author would wish to see destroyed. After all is done Goldsmith's charming portrait of him in "Retaliation" remains his best monument.

Here Cumberland lies, having acted his parts,  
The Terence of England, the mender of hearts ;  
A flattering painter who made it his care  
To draw men as they ought to be, not as they are ;  
His gallants are all faultless, his women divine,  
And comedy wonders at being so fine :  
Like a tragedy queen he has dizen'd her out,  
Or rather like tragedy giving a rout ;  
His fools have their follies so lost in a crowd  
Of virtues and feelings, that Folly grows proud,  
And coxcombs alike in their failings alone  
Adopting his portraits are pleased with their own ;  
Say where has our poet this malady caught ?  
Or wherefore his characters thus without fault ?  
Say was it that vainly directing his view  
To find out men's virtues and finding them few,  
Quite sick of pursuing each troublesome elf,  
He grew lazy at last and drew from himself

### “THE COOK’S ORACLE.”

SIXTY years ago the *Edinburgh Review* contained an article on Cookery, in which will be found a curious note concerning the author of the book whose title stands at the head of this page. “The singular coincidence of name and subject,” says the reviewer, “led us at first to suppose that a culpable modesty had induced the author to assume the pseudonym of ‘Kitchener;’ but in this we were mistaken: we find that there is a real Dr. Kitchiner, and that he is devoted to the culinary art with a zeal almost unequalled. If report be true, the Doctor spends some hours each day in his laboratory, and has more than once worked his whole book through, in a course of experimental cookery.” Thirty years later the *Quarterly*, in an article on Spectacles—a subject upon which the author of the “Cook’s Oracle” had also written—says of Dr. Kitchiner that “the whole of his writings, medical, musical, optical, and culinary, show that he possessed the disposition of an elderly female—conspicuous among her sex for weak nerves, fidgety habits, and prim comforts. . . . Many who heard of him, through his best and really excellent treatise, ‘The Cook’s Oracle,’ always imagined that some careful housekeeper had assumed a name in accordance with her functions and in defiance of her sex, and chose to call herself Dr. Kitchiner, since Sterne had appropriated the more suitable title of Dr. Slop.”

The ignorance which is apparent in these extracts—the former of which, it will be noticed, was written in the lifetime of its subject—still appears to exist; and there are probably many persons now living who believe that the greatest of English dietetic reformers is known to the world by an assumed name. Dr. Kitchiner was, however, a very real personage in his time—a gourmand, a wit, a musician, and a man of science—and although the biographical dictionaries usually ignore him altogether, or at best sum up the facts relating to his life in half a dozen lines, he was really one of those men of strongly marked individuality of character whom the world ought not willingly to forget.

William Kitchiner was educated at Eton; but the author of “Lives of Celebrated Etonians” makes no mention of him, probably thinking that the “Cook’s Oracle” had no claim to a place beside the authors of the “Scribleriad” and the “New Bath Guide.” His father is described by the *Gentleman’s Magazine* as an “eminent” coal merchant, in Beaufort Buildings, Strand, who, by the diligent exercise of his trade, contrived to amass a considerable fortune. This being invested with care and prudence, rendered the son independent of his profession, which was perhaps as well, seeing that his degree in medicine was merely from Glasgow, and did not permit of his practising in London. Accordingly he never attempted anything of the kind, but, taking a house in Warren Street, Fitzroy Square—then a neighbourhood of a much more respectable character than now—he settled down to the pursuits which his tastes inclined him to follow. His circumstances were somewhat peculiar; his character eccentric in no common degree; but

underneath the extremest of his oddities there was a basis of good-sense and kindness which won for him the regard of a host of friends. His wife, it is true, quarrelled with him at an early period of their married life, and the result was that he remained a "married bachelor" for about twenty years. Left alone, he devoted himself to domestic economy and music; and being always something of a *bon vivant*, he assumed the personal direction of his kitchen. As a general rule, he is said to have been moderate, and even abstemious, in his personal habits; but he was careful always to provide an excellent table, and to superintend the preparation of his food in person. There may have been a reason for this in the fact that, for some unknown reason, he had an immoderate appetite. In one or other of his voluminous writings he confesses to an altogether extraordinary love of animal food, or rather to a craving which could not be repressed, and which was not easily gratified. This, in the words of an admirer, "had nothing to do with the love of eating, but was the result of some organic and incurable disease." At all events, we hear no such stories as those which are told of Dr. Johnson's appetite, and of that veal pie well stuffed with plums which, according to Lord Macaulay, was wont to produce such spasms of gluttony in the "great lexicographer." Dr. Kitchiner lived by system; he rose at a stated hour: spent a pre-arranged time over his toilette; descended to his breakfast-room punctually at half-past eight; took luncheon at midday; dined at five; supped at half-past nine; and retired to rest at eleven. Breakfast was a solitary meal—light, but nourishing. Luncheon was a much more serious matter. A friend or two occasionally found ad-

mittance, and was treated with a repast which in the earlier days of this century he could hardly have found elsewhere. Savoury *pâtés*; potted meats of various kinds; fried and broiled fish; grills; cutlets and entrées of the most appetizing description, together with sound wine and excellent coffee and liqueurs, made up the substantial midday repast. At five-o'clock dinner, arranged according to the peptic precepts of the "Cook's Oracle," followed, leading up to the comfortable and cosy supper at half-past nine, which brought the gourmand's well-spent day to a close.

It must not be supposed that so much eating and drinking were exclusively selfish. The good Doctor delighted in hospitality, though he had some curious ways of displaying it. Thus, for example, when he gave a dinner-party the guests were invited for five o'clock, and at five minutes after that hour the street-door was locked, and the key, by his orders, laid upon the dinner-table. For several years a conversazione was held every Tuesday evening at his house, and, according to tradition, on these occasions a placard was suspended over the chimney-piece, with the inscription, "Come at seven; go at eleven." It happened on one occasion that George Colman the younger was amongst the guests, and he, observing the placard, inserted the word "it" after "go," making the admonition read, "Come at seven; go it at eleven." Severer counsels generally prevailed, though it might have been supposed that the friendly supper at half-past nine would lead to occasional infractions of the rule of the house. It does not, however, appear that the Doctor allowed his habits to be disturbed by any of his friends, facetious or other. Music and conversation filled up the evening until the appointed time, and then some con-

siderate guest was always found to say, with properly affected surprise, "'Tis on the stroke of eleven!" "Hats, coats, cloaks, and umbrellas were then brought in; the Doctor attended his friends to the street door, looked up at the *stars*—if there were any visible—gave each of his friends a cordial shake of the hand, wished him a hearty good-night, and so the evening closed." That his friends were many need hardly be said. A man so hospitable could hardly fail to gather around him a goodly host of associates; and when to his hospitality was added his well-known love for art, literature, and music, it may be readily understood that the society in which he habitually lived was of the best. His personal qualities, apart from his pardonable eccentricities, were of the highest order. He was amiable in no common degree. One of his friends said, after his death, that he had never heard him say an ill-natured word of any one. He was much in request for the settlement of disputes, and to those who needed advice and assistance he was faithful and staunch. His eccentricities seem to have been, after all, eccentricities of manner only, though his will is said to have been exceedingly curious, and very disappointing to a large number of persons who had expected to profit by it. For the rest it is hardly for a generation, whose affectations and sham æstheticisms have not been corrected even by such satirists as the authors of "*The Monks of Thelema*," and Mr. George Du Maurier, to be very severe on a gentleman whose principal offences seem to been a liking for substantial good living and a habit of making indifferent jokes about his dinner. There is surely nothing very reprehensible in such an invitation as the following, which was handed about in the

author's lifetime, and published after his death as a proof of his oddity :—

“ Dear Sir,—The honour of your company is requested to dine with the Committee of Taste on Wednesday next, the 10th inst.

“ The specimens will be placed upon the table at five o'clock precisely, when the business of the day will immediately commence.

“ I have the honour to be your most obedient Savant,

“ W. KITCHINER, Secretary.”

“ August, 1825 : 43, Warren Street, Fitzroy Square.

“ At the last general meeting it was unanimously resolved that :—

“ 1st. An invitation to the Eta Beta Pi must be answered in writing as soon as possible after it is received, within twenty-four hours at latest reckoning from that on which it is dated, otherwise the Secretary will have the profound regret to feel that the invitation has been definitely declined.

“ 2nd. The Secretary having represented that the perfection of several of the preparations is so exquisitely evanescent that the delay of one minute after their arrival at the meridian of concoction will render them no longer worthy of the attention of men of taste :

“ Therefore, to insure the punctual attendance of those illustrious gastronomists who on grand occasions are invited to join this high tribunal of taste for their own pleasure and the benefit of their country, it is irrevocably resolved, That the janitor be ordered not to admit any visitor, of whatever eminence of appetite, after the hour at which the Secretary shall have announced that the specimens are ready.

“ By order of the Committee,

“ WILLIAM KITCHINER, Secretary.”

The memorialist from whom this letter is quoted goes on to say in effect that the guest who received such an invitation would naturally find himself at the house of Dr. Kitchiner—host, cook, secretary to the Committee of Taste, and chief musician in ordinary—at a few minutes before five in the afternoon, where he would be received with musical honours. His host would probably be found seated at the grand piano in pumps and silk stockings, thundering away at “ See the conquering hero comes,” with a due accompaniment of

drums and triangles worked by the feet. Punctuality was strictly insisted upon—how strictly may be best known from the pages of the “Cook’s Oracle,” which, it may be remarked by the way, is not a mere cookery-book, but a work which contains a vast quantity of shrewd and humorous observation, wit, and sound common-sense. The supercilious critics of the quarterly reviews might sneer as they pleased; the excellent Dr. Kitchiner, with all his weaknesses, will probably be remembered by a wider public than one composed of the readers of the somewhat mechanical essays in which he was satirized. Turning now to the “Oracle,” we find a long chapter devoted to the momentous subject of invitations to dinner. More than two closely printed octavo pages of this chapter are occupied with a dissertation, illustrated by examples from ancient and modern literature, of the important fact that “DINNER is the only act of the day which cannot be put off with Impunity for even FIVE MINUTES” (the peculiarities of typography are Dr. Kitchiner’s). Then follow a host of instructions, including a recipe for “dinner-pills,” or, as the Doctor prefers to call them, “PERISTALTIC PERSUADERS,” and a number of instructions to butler, host, and cook. The first is told that he must be sure that “the Cloth be laid in the Parlour and all the paraphernalia of the dinner-table arranged at least half an hour before dinner-time.” The host in turn is to introduce his guests to each other in the interval before dinner, “naming them individually in an audible voice, and adroitly laying hold of those ties of acquaintanceship or profession which may exist between them.” The guests are admonished if they have any respect for their host, or prefer a well-dressed dinner to one that is spoiled, “instead of coming half an hour

after, to take care to make their appearance a quarter of an hour before the time appointed." A couple of pages more on the benefits of punctuality follow, and then the good Doctor descants upon the custom of grace—not, it may be observed, for the first or only time in the course of his voluminous oracles.

On this subject the "Gentle Elia" has also dis-coursed in one of the subtlest and most playful of his essays, the point of which, delicately touched and played with, seems to be that grace before meat is a species of impertinence. Dr. Kitchiner seems to be pretty much of Charles Lamb's opinion. When the appointed hour strikes, he urges his gastrophilic readers to "say grace and begin the business of the day." Nor does he desire to listen to long and elaborate musical performances. "That the intricate Old Canon of *Non nobis* should still continue to exclude all other Graces has excited my astonishment," says he, "ever since I first heard it some Thirty years ago, when, thought I, can anything be more barbarous than to sing in a Foreign Tongue, of which not one in Ten of those who sing and not One in a Hundred of those who hear, understand One Word in Ten of? Moreover, to complete this extreme Absurdity, the composer has contributed his utmost to involve these *Latin* words in the most elaborate obscurity, by setting them in the form of a *fugue*, which (however pretty it may seem to the eye and ear of a subtle contrapuntist), as *each singer pronounces a different word*, the Sense is thereby as confused as Sounds are in a Dutch Concert, where each man Sings a different Song! However, this composition is considered such an indispensable part of the ceremonial of Public Dinners that it has been calculated that the good people of Great Britain do not pay less

than TEN THOUSAND POUNDS A YEAR for the performance of it!"

This dreadful state of things not merely arouses the wrath of the "Cook's Oracle," but induces him to present a musical grace of his own, which may certainly boast the merit of brevity, even though it be not quite so short as the famous "grace after meat" of the collier, which, as will probably be remembered, consisted in wiping the mouth upon the wrist, and the ejaculation of the word "Theer." Between this perfunctory phrase and the too elaborate *Non nobis*, Dr. Kitchiner's grace holds a happy medium, consisting, as it does, of the simple words "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow," set to music. As about fifteen seconds only need be consumed in this devout expression, it is possible that some guests at public banquets may even now wish to see Dr. Kitchiner's modest grace brought into more general use. To the hungry diner-out it is no small trial of patience to be kept whilst a reverend gentleman in full canonicals intones a grace modelled on the Bidding Prayer before a University Sermon. Supplementing these remarks of the venerable Doctor come some hints to carvers, interesting chiefly as pointing, in the first place, to the ungainly custom of our ancestors of introducing soup and fish as one course, with entrées, roast, and game as a remove, and in the second as proving that the "Cook's Oracle" was in advance of his time, and was prepared to see the entire abolition of the tiresome custom of carving at table. A prevision of the sweet simplicity of the *dîner à la Russe* could hardly be expected in 1816, but something of the sort was evidently present to the mind of our Oracle when he wrote: "It would save a great deal of time, &c., if

poultry, especially large turkeys and geese, were sent to table ready cut up; fish that is fried should be previously divided into such portions as are fit to help at table."

Before proceeding to the dinner, however, Dr. Kitchiner gives his readers, both cooks and their masters, a little good advice. Masters, for example, he recommends to treat their servants with consideration, and he enters into an elaborate calculation to show that the absolutely necessary expenditure of a maid-servant (in which the Oracle includes tea and sugar) is at the least 9*l.* 8*s.* per annum; and that, in consequence, it is the duty of employers to pay higher wages and to treat their servants with greater generosity generally than they were wont to do some sixty years ago. For their part servants are treated with much good advice, some of which reads rather curiously, though most of it is marked by the soundest common-sense. Thus, for example, after somewhat elaborately describing the physiological phenomena of taste, the "Cook's Oracle" cautions his disciples against wearing out the palate by over-much tasting. "A sagacious Cook, instead of idly and wantonly wasting the excitability of her palate, on the sensibility of which her reputation and fortune depend, when she has ascertained the relative strength of the flavour of the various ingredients she employs, will call in the Balance and the Measure to do the ordinary business, and endeavour to preserve her Organ of Taste with the utmost care, that it may be a faithful oracle to refer to on grand occasions and new compositions." The notion of defining quantities in cookery by weight and measure, instead of going upon the old "rule of thumb—a pinch of this, a handful of that, a spoonful of t'other," Dr. Kitchiner

claims as his exclusive property, and in one place he is judiciously severe upon an ignorant pretender who appropriated the idea, and published a cookery-book based upon it ten years after the appearance of the first edition of the "Cook's Oracle." It is not a little amusing in this connexion to reflect that Gouffé, whose magnificent book upon cookery appeared in 1865, puts forward precisely the same pretension. Dr. Kitchiner has, however, on most occasions what the Scotch preacher called "a gude conceit o' hissel'," and not unfrequently a very odd way of expressing it. Thus at the beginning of his Introduction he says of his book that it is "not a mere marrowless collection of shreds and patches and cuttings and pastings, but a *bonâ fide* register of Practical Facts, accumulated by a perseverance not to be subdued or evaporated by the igniferous terrors of a Roasting Fire in the Dog Days —in defiance of the Odoriferous and Calefacient repellents of *Roasting*, *Boiling*, *Frying*, and *Broiling*;— moreover the Author has submitted to a labour no preceding Cookery-Book maker, perhaps, ever attempted to encounter, having *eaten* each receipt before he set it down in his book." The grammar of this wonderful sentence may perhaps be open to correction, but the "Odoriferous and Calefacient repellents" of cookery and the "igniferous terrors of a Roasting Fire in the Dog Days" are worthy of the inventor of the "Frappant and Tintinnabulant appendages" to Drury Lane stage-door in the "Rejected Addresses." His boast of having "eaten his receipts" may perhaps be left to take care of itself.

It may be worth while to consult the "Oracle" and to note what the hierophant has to say concerning a few of what he calls the "concomitants" of an English

dinner. Oysters, of course, begin the meal. "Delicate little creatures!" ejaculates Dr. Kitchiner, "they are as exquisite in their own taste as in that of others." His observations on the eating of oysters are eminently characteristic. "Common people," he tells us, "are indifferent about the *manner of opening Oysters*, and the time of eating them after they are opened. Nothing, however, is more important in the enlightened eyes of the experienced Oyster-eater. Those who wish to enjoy this delicious restorative in its utmost perfection must eat it the moment it is opened, with its own Gravy in the under-shell; if not *Eaten while Absolutely Alive* its flavour and spirit are lost. The true lover of an Oyster will have some regard for the feelings of his little favourite, and will never abandon it to the mercy of a bungling operator, but will open it himself, and contrive to detach the fish from the shell so dexterously that the Oyster is hardly conscious he has been ejected from his Lodging till he feels the teeth of the piscivorous *Gourmand* tickling him to death." This is almost as attractive a picture as that of Piscator in the "Complete Angler" impaling the worm upon the hook "as if he loved him." The chapters on soup afford one or two curious notes. Amongst the recipes, for example, is one for "Mock Mock Turtle," which appears to be the invention of "Elizabeth Lister (late Cook to Dr. Kitchiner), Bread and Biscuit Baker, No. 6, Salcombe Place, York Terrace, Regent's Park—Goes out to dress dinners on reasonable terms." Concerning mock turtle we are informed that it "is the *Bonne Bouche* which the 'officers of the Mouth' of Old England prepare when they choose to rival '*les Grands Cuisiniers de (sic) France*' in a *Ragoût sans Pareil.*" The directions for making this soup fill

altogether about four pages, and embedded amongst them comes the following outburst in praise of the dish (the italics and the capitals are the Doctor's): "Without its paraphernalia of subtle double Relishes a *STARVED TURTLE* has *not more* intrinsic sapidity than a *FATTED CALF*. Friendly Reader, it is really neither half so wholesome nor half so toothsome." Later on he says: "This is a delicious Soup within the range of those 'who eat to live;' but if it had been composed expressly for those who only 'live to eat,' I do not know how it could have been made more agreeable: as it is, the lover of good eating 'will wish his throat a mile long, and every inch of it palate.' "

Concerning fish, the only really noticeable direction is a piece of advice to the cook not to allow turbot and some other fish to be sent to the table too fresh. It is not until we get amongst the *entrées*—or, as Dr. Kitchiner prefers to call them, the "*Made Dishes*"—that anything really characteristic is found. The first noticeable point is that the majority of these "*Made Dishes*" are hashes. The exception is a recipe for cooking "*Shin of Beef*," for which dish the Oracle claims the attention of the "*Rational Epicure*," on the ground of its being "*one of those in which 'Frugality,' 'Nourishment,' and 'Palateableness' are most happily combined—and you get half a Gallon of excellent BROTH into the Bargain.*" As a pendant to this whimsical recipe we have one for "*Bubble and Squeak*," or *Fried Beef or Mutton and Cabbage* (No. 505):—

"Where, 'midst the Frying-Pan in accents Savage,  
The Beef, so surly, quarrels with the Cabbage."

*D $\flat$  Minor*

Musical score for D-flat Minor. The top staff uses a treble clef and has a key signature of four flats. The bottom staff uses a bass clef and has a key signature of one sharp. The lyrics are: B E E F C A B B A G E. The music consists of two measures followed by a repeat sign.

*or G $\sharp$  Major*

Musical score for G-sharp Major. The top staff uses a treble clef and has a key signature of three sharps. The bottom staff uses a bass clef and has a key signature of one sharp. The lyrics are: C A B B A G E B E B F. The music consists of two measures followed by a repeat sign.

Dr. Kitchiner is perhaps the first "Cook's Oracle" who has set his instructions to music, and considering the eccentricities of his musical grammar, it may be hoped that he will be the last. It is, of course, impossible now to say whether the author of "Pendennis" had Dr. Kitchiner in his mind when he hit upon the exquisitely ludicrous character of Mirobolant—that wonderful French cook in Sir Francis Clavering's household, who was wont to seek for inspiration when composing his *menus* in the performance of solemn music on the piano—but the coincidence is certainly amusing. In connexion with this combination of music and cookery, Dr. Kitchiner tells a curious anecdote in—of all places in the world—the queer rambling treatise in two volumes which he called the "Economy of the Eyes." Mr. Cooke, of Drury Lane Theatre, a singer and composer whom Dr. Kitchiner styles "the most extraordinary musician of the present age," possessed the faculty of naming every semitone, with-

out a mistake, if a handful of the keys of a harpsichord were put down "so as to produce the most irrelative combinations." On one occasion the Doctor played the above remarkable composition over to him, whereupon he "told me at once—'I think, sir, that you have *beef* in one hand and *cabbage* in the other.'"

It should, however, be noted that music is one of the subjects upon which the "*Cook's Oracle*" is most diffuse, and on which he unquestionably spent a good deal of time and labour. Amongst his many publications is a tiny duodecimo, published in 1821, and not apparently reprinted, which has for title "*Observations on Vocal Music.*" The principal object of this little essay is the enforcement of an idea, the germ of which is to be found in the eighteenth *Spectator*. Addison, whom no one would accuse of being a musician, there expatiates on the desirability of wedding the music to the words with greater propriety than was then usual. "I remember," he says, "an Italian verse that ran thus, word for word: 'And turned my rage into pity,' which the English for rhyme sake translated 'And into pity turned my rage,' By this means the soft notes that were adapted to pity in the Italian fell upon the word *rage* in the English; and the angry sounds that were turned to *rage* in the original were made to express *pity* in the translation. It oftentimes happened, likewise, that the finest notes in the air fell upon the most insignificant words in the sentence. I have known the word 'and' pursued through a whole gamut; have been entertained with many a melodious 'the,' and have heard the most beautiful graces, quavers, and divisions bestowed upon 'then,' 'for,' and 'from,' to the eternal honour of our English particles." Dr. Kitchiner does not refer to

the earlier writer, but the principle of his little book is certainly to be found in these words. Music is in his eyes a vehicle for the conveyance of ideas, and the eighty-one pages of this book are given to expounding, in a variety of ways, and with abundant illustrations, the theory that “the Art of Singing effectively is to Sing every word with the same Accent and Emphasis as you would Speak it,” a theory which he contends has been unduly neglected by some of the greatest musicians, who have failed to make the musical accent correspond with the spoken. “‘He shall feed his flock’ and ‘He was despised’ are examples of equally false emphasis. ‘Fairest Isle’ is one of Purcell’s extraordinary mistakes.”

This affection for music displays itself in the most unexpected places. Amongst the works of Dr. Kitchiner is a “Traveller’s Oracle,” in two parts. The first contains estimates of the expenses of travelling on foot, on horseback, in stages, in post-chaises, and in private carriages, together with “precepts for promoting the pleasures, and hints for preserving the health of travellers.” The second part comprises “The Horse and Carriage-keeper’s Oracle,” rules for purchasing, keeping, and jobbing horses and carriages, estimates of expenses occasioned thereby, and an easy plan for ascertaining every hackney coach fare. The book itself is not especially remarkable for anything except for having furnished the celebrated sporting writer “Nimrod” with a text for his well-known article on “The Road” in the *Quarterly* of 1832. It may be noted, by the way, that the only allusion to the text in this article is a slight sneer at “the late happily-named Dr. Kitchener” (*sic*), whom “Nimrod” describes as *Epicuri de grege porcus*. It might be thought

that music was about the last thing to look for in such a book as this, but Dr. Kitchiner is not to be prevented from bringing in his favourite topic by any fantastic notions of congruity. He introduces no fewer than eight musical compositions into the book; the title of which, by the way, affords but the faintest idea of its heterogeneous contents. The first comes after a dissertation on the Christian duty of observing the Sabbath, and is called "A Father's Advice to his Son." The "Cook's Oracle" is responsible for both words and music in this as in most of the pieces contained in this book. The hymn runs,—

Be humble, patient, trust in God,  
Believe what is, is best;  
Walk in the path your Saviour trod,  
Your days will then be blest.

It is only fair to say that the music is considerably better than the words. In another place, *à propos* to a piece of advice to his readers concerning abstinence from religious discussions with strangers, he presents them with "An Universal Prayer," to which the same remark will apply. By way of a change from the severity of these devout exercises, we are treated, in the course of a particularly stupid story, to settings of "Fill the Goblet again," and of Herrick's "Gather your rosebuds while you may," while the return of the traveller to his native country is celebrated in a patriotic song, "All hail, Britannia! Queen of Isles!"

Next to religion, on which the "Cook's Oracle" appears to have felt very strongly, though it appears to have exercised little influence on his domestic relations, patriotism is, indeed, one of the principal features in his character. Thus the song just mentioned is ushered in with the following portentous sentence: "When he (the

Traveller) considers the arbitrary and tyrannic governments, the slavery and poverty of the lower class of people, the pride and ignorance of the opulent, and the superstition and bigotry of both, and compares them with the advantages which so eminently distinguish his own country, where the climate is temperate, the earth fruitful, the government mild, the inhabitants of both sexes intelligent, and the women remarkably beautiful, he will then rest contented with the happiness he enjoys by having it in his power to spend the remainder of his days in HAPPY ENGLAND, and sing with heart and voice ‘All hail,’ &c.” Another illustration of this patriotic temper will be found embedded in a collection of amatory and anacreontic songs which Kitchiner published about the commencement of the present century. The sixth number is a “Grand March composed for and dedicated to the Volunteers of St. Clement Danes,” bearing date 1803, the year of the breaking out of the French war. This is followed by two “British War-songs” similarly dedicated. There is a fine Philistine contempt for foreigners about Dr. Kitchiner’s words at which it is difficult not to smile, in spite of the indubitable patriotism and spirit of the lines.

Britain’s great and warlike host  
 Scorn the puny threats of slaves ;  
 Ere the cowards reach your coast  
     They shall find their wat’ry graves.  
 Atheist Gallia bends her knee  
     At a base usurper’s nod :  
 Britons, ever bold and free,  
     Love their king—adore their God.  
 Gallia’s gaunt and rabble rout,  
     Famine leads to lawless spoil :  
 Britons’ courage, ever stout,  
     Centers in their native soil.

Gallia skulks within her ports—  
Gallia great in threats alone :  
Britain every danger courts,  
Bravely rallies round the throne.

Amongst the miscellaneous works of Dr. Kitchiner was a “Housekeeper’s Oracle”—a companion to the “Cook’s Oracle”—which is not unamusing reading, inasmuch as it is full of quaint common-sense, and affords, besides, an interesting picture of social life in the middle-class at the close of the last century. Amongst the maxims which the Oracle impresses on the young housekeeper is one enforcing the prudence of “dealing with tradesmen of fair character and established circumstances.” Another concerns the wisdom of “submitting cheerfully to be imposed on in due proportion to your circumstances. He who will not be cheated *a little*,” adds the Doctor, “must be content to be abused *a great deal*, to be at constant variance with his servants, tradesmen, and with every one dependent on him”—maxims which will hardly be acceptable to the customers of Co-operative Stores. On dinners and dinner-giving Dr. Kitchiner has a chapter or two full of that sound practical wisdom which distinguishes the essays of the late Mr. Thackeray on the same subjects, the keynote being—“However plain your dinner, if it is prime, plentiful, and properly dressed, it will be as acceptable to friends to whom *you* are acceptable as a profusion of all the expensive Rarities which Extravagance could have assembled.” It is, however, as a picture of manners that the “Housekeeper’s Oracle” is most interesting. Thus, for example, the author dilates at length on the utter folly of those “children of a larger growth” who give dinners at seven or eight o’clock—a subject

which excites him to almost as great wrath as "your silly, infecting farrago of *Mude Dishes* and preparations, which are provided to pamper satiated Appetite and to feed the eyes of superannuated Epicures, that overcome the Stomach and paralyze the Digestion of those who eat them, and empty the Pockets of those who provide them."

Another of these works has a title-page of prodigious length, and is devoted to "The Art of Invigorating and Prolonging Life." It is dedicated to the nervous and bilious, and contains essays on Training, Reducing Corpulence, on Sleep, Siesta, Clothes, Fire, Air, Exercise, and Wine. A little pamphlet is also appended, called "Peptic Precepts," and the whole concludes with an "Essay on the Pleasure of Making a Will." The leading idea of the book—which is addressed, not to the medical profession, but to hypochondriacs and invalids—is common-sense. Thus, when the Doctor is discoursing of sleep, he does not advise his readers to make themselves miserable by getting up at unearthly hours, or to attempt to do without a sufficient amount of natural rest. As for wine, the patient is recommended to drink it if he likes, but to refrain from taking bad or common wine, and from spoiling what he drinks by icing it; but, adds the Doctor, "our VINUM BRITANNICUM—good home-brewed Beer—which has been very deservedly called Liquid Bread, is preferable to any other beverage during dinner or supper." In the matter of medicine, Dr. Kitchiner was decidedly in advance of his age. His prescriptions—and this little volume contains a good many of them—are the mildest and gentlest that can be imagined, and the advice of the author is to take as little of them as possible. Curiously enough, however,

although the “Cook’s Oracle” lived by rule, he appears never to have been a thoroughly healthy man; and, although he laid down excellent principles for invigorating and prolonging life, he died in his fiftieth year. He devoted twenty pages of this book to “The Pleasure of Making a Will,” which act he described as the art of dying honourably. All that he says is excellent sense; but his precepts and his practice appear to have been strangely at variance. According to a writer in the *Gentleman’s Magazine* “the Doctor’s Will, made about sixteen years since, is as remarkable for its eccentricity as any of the productions of the testator, and it is said that another, making some serious alterations in the disposal of his property, was intended for signature on the Wednesday following the night on which he died.” One of his own precepts, however, his will fully carried out. He is particularly careful to impress upon his readers the duty of remembering “the claims of him who, as the law expresses it, has no kindred—who is *nullius filius*—who has no protector but his reputed parent.” Dr. Kitchiner had such a son, whom he educated at Cambridge, and to whom he bequeathed the bulk of his property.

## ISAAC DISRAELI AND BOLTON CORNEY.

THERE has, perhaps, never been an English writer who attained an astonishing literary reputation with such consummate ease as Isaac Disraeli. To read the encomiums of his illustrious son contained in the preface to his collected works, and even the compliments paid to him by a host of contemporaries, it might be imagined that, instead of being a mere book-maker of altogether second-rate abilities, he was the first Englishman who had brought genius to bear upon subjects of literature. The fact really is, that literary criticism and literary research were somewhat out of fashion in this country when Isaac Disraeli began to publish, and that thus his small achievements gained an altogether disproportionate amount of praise. At the present day, the little articles which make up the volumes known as the "Curiosities of Literature," "Amenities of Literature," and so forth, would hardly find acceptance in a third-rate magazine; yet, when they first appeared, something more than half a century ago, they were accounted marvels of erudition. Byron, Scott, Moore, Southey, and Bulwer were proud to applaud them; while even bibliographers and critics like Dr. Dibdin, Mr. John Wilson Croker, and Mr. S. W. Singer raised their tuneful notes in praise of Isaac Disraeli. Lord Lytton (the elder) in his salad days was not ashamed to speak of him as the "Horace Walpole of Literature."

It is probable that Mr. Bulwer—as he was when he wrote this phrase—intended his words for a compliment, but it may be open to question whether Isaac Disraeli regarded them in that light. His own opinion of Walpole was of the lowest. He describes him as “one of the Pucks of Literature,” and with a fine irony praises his “new views and bold deductions,” his “deep and tender sentiment”—perhaps the most utterly absurd subjects for applause which he could have selected; and his “charming lucubrations”—which is probably the oddest description of the arid and commonplace “Anecdotes of Painting” that the most perverse ingenuity could have devised. Probably before the close of his life Lord Lytton, whose mind was always growing, saw reason to modify his opinions and to accredit Isaac Disraeli with fewer and less exalted qualities.

The veteran man of letters was not, however, allowed to enjoy his honours wholly without the intrusion of the critics. More than once it was hinted that his vaunted discoveries were no discoveries at all; that the substance of some of his most effective and most popular works might be found in books within the reach of every student; and that, when wholly original, he was not unfrequently curiously incorrect. As a rule, however, the attacks were made in such a fashion as to render the task of answering them either easy in the extreme or altogether unnecessary. Mr. Bolton Corney was an exception to the rule. He was a scholar and a gentleman, a man of wit and a man of the world, and he had the advantage of knowing thoroughly some subjects of which Isaac Disraeli possessed only a feeble smattering. Thus, for example, the latter was once sufficiently ill-advised to write on the Bayeux Tapestry.

His article betrayed its writer—it was flimsy, weak, and superficial in the extreme. Those who read it, and who knew anything about the subject, could hardly believe that the author had even seen the tapestry he professed to describe, and, as a matter of fact, it is believed that he never did. Nevertheless, he talks in a marvellously confident way about that remarkable piece of work, sneers elaborately at its rude drawing and absurd colouring, and makes some curiously rash statements on questions of fact and matters of detail.

Mr. Bolton Corney, on the other hand, had made the Bayeux Tapestry a subject of careful and elaborate study for many years. His work upon it is even now a standard authority; and he was thus able, to use the phrase of a contemporary critic, to "turn Mr. Disraeli inside out" when he had to deal with this subject. So with other matters. The whole controversy is contained in a series of pamphlets long out of print, but preserved in the British Museum, and affording some of the most amusing reading upon which any man of literary tastes is likely to alight. Even the title-pages are comic; and when one turns the page and comes upon the pamphlets themselves, their typographical eccentricities are a source of perennial delight. Mr. Bolton Corney must have taxed the resources of his printing-office in no ordinary fashion. He fairly revels in the variety of his typography. Black letter and italic; small capitals and large; upper case and lower case; notes of admiration and inverted commas in profusion diversify every page, and impart a pleasing variety to its effect upon the eye. It is, indeed, surprising how keen a sarcasm becomes when it is printed in small capitals; how biting a satire may be made when it is repeated for

the thirtieth time ; how brilliant a jest when all the varieties of type are used in a single sentence to enforce it ; and how infinitely the force of a stroke of wit is increased when it is followed by three notes of exclamation in a parenthesis. Mr. Bolton Corney, it may be admitted, lays himself open to a certain amount of animadversion in this respect ; but Mr. Disraeli, though he indulges somewhat less in typographical eccentricities, outdoes him in personal abuse. His pamphlets, indeed, possess no inconsiderable interest from a literary point of view, but they are also noteworthy as specimens of a happily extinct species of literary controversy. The flowers of eloquence with which his pages are adorned form a *florilegium* of no ordinary beauty. He has, for example, no hesitation whatever in talking about "the malice of his critic," and "the baseness of his vulgarity." He tells his reader that "it is a long time since he declined to hold a branglement (*sic*) with a blockhead." On the next page he declares that Mr. Bolton Corney is "a most unknightly chevalier, stuffed out by some contrivance for the nonce, so that the fellow appears larger than nature made him. You see," he goes on, "by the carle's coarse-grained hands what work he has been used to ; the ribald might be formidable in a leather jerkin handling a pike-staff, but he is somewhat grotesque in the tilt." Elsewhere we hear of Mr. Bolton Corney's "impudence and disingenuousness ;" we find him spoken of as a "pig in a drawing-room," and described as a "literary yahoo." These are, it is to be presumed, some of those amenities of literature of which Mr. Disraeli speaks in another place ; but, on the other hand, it must be confessed that Mr. Bolton Corney contrives to give his adversary many a shrewd nip. His first pamphlet has for title,

“ ‘Curiosities of Literature,’ by I. Disraeli, Esq., Doctor of Civil Law of the University of Oxford; a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London. Illustrated by Bolton Corney, Esq., Honorary Professor of Criticism in the République des Lettres, and Member of the Society of English Bibliophiles.” The second edition bears on the title-page the announcement that the work has been “revised and acuminated,” the acumination consisting mainly in a more frequent and more sarcastic repetition of the unfortunate Mr. Disraeli’s titles and distinctions. Appended to the second edition is a reprint of the third pamphlet of the series, entitled “Ideas on Controversy deduced from the practice of a veteran, and adapted to the meanest capacity.” This last is a retort upon Mr. Disraeli’s reply to Mr. Bolton Corney’s first pamphlet, a little work on large paper, entitled the “Illustrator Illustrated,” and it is by no means the least amusing of the series.

Mr. Bolton Corney’s charges against Mr. Disraeli are thirty in number; some grave, some commonplace; one or two hypercritical, and as many thoroughly trivial. The gist of the accusation is, as a rule, first, that the author of the “Curiosities of Literature” is not original; secondly, that he is superficial and incorrect; and, thirdly, that he appropriates the work of his predecessors even whilst reviling them, and gives, as the results of his unaided researches, matter which other writers had already published. The first count of this portentous indictment is headed as follows (the italics are Mr. Bolton Corney’s):—“The *Original MS.* of the Justinian *discovered* by I. Disraeli, Esq., D.C.L., and F.S.A.,” and the charge is based upon the following paragraph from the first edition of the “Curiosities:”—

The original manuscript of Justinian's Code was discovered by the Pisans accidentally when they took a city in Calabria ; that vast code of laws had been in a manner unknown from the time of that Emperor. This curious book was brought to Pisa, and, when Pisa was taken by the Florentines, was transferred to Florence, where it is still preserved.<sup>1</sup>

In later editions of the "Curiosities" this most astounding statement is modified. That of 1858, for example, mentions (vol. i. pp. 20—21) the manuscript as that of Justinian's Pandects, but the word "original" is still retained. Mr. Bolton Corney's comments fill four octavo pages. Their substance is that the MS. referred to was not of the Code as stated by Mr. Disraeli, but of the Pandects ; that, though undoubtedly the MS. was of great antiquity, it was by no means the "original;" and that, so far from the Code having been "unknown" in any manner, "the Roman law had, according to Sir James Mackintosh, never lost its authority in the countries which formed the Western Empire"—all which the reader will probably consider to be a sufficiently grave number of charges to bring against a single paragraph of six lines. Mr. Disraeli's answer is somewhat more than sufficiently vague. Having no case, he devotes his energies to personal

<sup>1</sup> It is not a little singular that Alexandre Dumas in his pseudo-history, *Gaule et France*, has fallen into precisely the same blunder with Isaac Disraeli. At page 340 he enumerates, amongst the benefits conferred upon France in the reign of Louis VII., the discovery of the Code of Justinian and its establishment in France as the written law. "Here," says M. Quérard (*Supercheries Littéraires*, tom. i. col. 1136), "are two errors : the first relating to the discovery of the Code of Justinian, the second relative to its establishment in France." The Code of Justinian has never been lost. M. Dumas confounded the Code of Justinian with the Florentine Pandects, the manuscript of which was really recovered at the capture of Amalfi by the Pisans, in 1130, during the quarrels of Pope Innocent II. and the Antipope Anaclet II.

abuse of his accuser. He lays "profound ignorance" to the charge of Mr. Bolton Corney at the outset, and he accuses him of pretending to a wide and accurate acquaintance with the civil law. Both charges, it needs hardly to be said, are wholly beside the mark, and, even if true, would prove nothing more than that Mr. Disraeli failed to appreciate the real drift of the charge he had to answer. Mr. Bolton Corney accuses him of writing "clotted nonsense" upon a subject of which he is profoundly ignorant. It is obviously no answer to such a charge to say that Mr. Bolton Corney pretends to a knowledge which he does not possess. Nor is Mr. Disraeli more happy when he comes to the charge itself. He is forced to admit that he did not know what were the contents of the manuscript he professed to describe; and, as he leaves the quotation from Sir James Mackintosh unanswered, it may be taken for granted that he felt the impossibility of defending his wild assertions about the Roman law. By way, however, of a little revenge he coolly insinuates that his critic is ignorant of the difference between the Justinian and the Gregorian Codes—by which he does not materially improve his own position—and he winds up his defence by a pitiful complaint that Mr. Bolton Corney had "expressed his comments in a tone and spirit which could not be endured in gentlemanlike society." In view of the phrases which Mr. Disraeli permits himself to use with respect to his opponent, this pathetic complaint of want of taste has, to say the least, a rather amusing effect. According to Mr. Disraeli it is permissible in "gentlemanlike society" to call your opponent a "pig," a "carle," or a "yahoo;" but it is wholly against the laws of the same society to hint that a D.C.L. of the University of

Oxford—honorary or otherwise—ought to know at least so much about Roman law as twenty minutes with an encyclopædia would teach him.

The next charge against the author of the “Curiosities” is not very important, but it is interesting as being characteristic alike of the culprit and of his accuser. Isaac Disraeli, as his greater son has told us, came home from the Continent saturated with the theories of Voltaire and Rousseau, and naturally lost no opportunity of sneering at the Church, the clergy, and even the Christian religion. When, therefore, he has to describe the Bayeux tapestry he speaks of Odon, Bishop of Bayeux, as bearing a “mace” at the battle of Hastings “for the purpose that when he despatched his antagonist he might not spill blood, but only break his bones.” On this statement he adds the profound and valuable reflection that “religion has its quibbles as well as law.” The whole matter is so trite and so silly that one can hardly imagine any human being finding it a matter of interest, still less, any two people quarrelling over it. Mr. Bolton Corney had, however, as has already been mentioned, made the Bayeux tapestry a matter of especial study, and was, of course, keenly alive to any blunders which his opponents might make with regard to it. When, therefore, he finds Mr. Disraeli not merely making a mistake as to facts, but tagging to his blunder a reflection worthy of a schoolboy’s theme, he attacks his adversary without mercy. No time is wasted in preliminaries. He charges Mr. Disraeli with ignorance; expresses strong doubts as to whether he has seen the tapestry at all; and points out that the bishop wears no armour, but simply carries a staff—not a mace—as a symbol of authority; from which he draws the conclusion that

the bishop took no active part in the battle, but simply confined himself to encouraging the soldiers. Seeing that more than one mediæval bishop fought vigorously, there is perhaps nothing very extraordinary in Mr. Disraeli's error, though for the sake of his own reputation it would have been better had he refrained from emphasizing it by a trite and trumpery sneer at religion. In reply, Mr. Disraeli, finding it impossible to deny that he has blundered, sneers, by way of revenge, at "the rude and coarse materials" of the Bayeux tapestry, and with delightful self-complacency declares that his childish remark is "an idea pregnant with a whole volume : it is seed which will not germinate in the stubble of his (Mr. Corney's) mind."

Passing over one or two somewhat trivial accusations against Mr. Disraeli—if, indeed, any can be considered trivial which impugn the trustworthiness of a public instructor—we come upon a graver charge. It is stated in the "*Curiosities*" that "Cervantes composed the most agreeable book in the Spanish language during his captivity in Barbary"—a plain and direct statement which Mr. Bolton Corney proceeds to traverse by showing, upon irrefragable evidence, that between the release of Cervantes from his captivity amongst the Moors and the publication of "*Don Quixote*" a period of no less than five-and-twenty years elapsed. It is sufficiently obvious that the story is a pure invention ; but Mr. Bolton Corney goes further than merely proving its character. He traces it to its source, which is nothing more recondite than that repertory of anecdotes, good, bad, and indifferent, known as the "*Ménagiana*." In that book, upon which the author of the "*Curiosities*" drew with remarkable liberality, happy in the confidence that the great mass of his readers

were likely never to have heard of it, the following sentence may be found :—“ J’ay oui dire que Michel de Cervantes, auteur de ce roman de Dom Quixote, était manchot et qu’il auoit composé ce livre étant captif en Barbarie.” Mr. Bolton Corney’s comment is amusing :—“ In 1791 appeared anonymously a volume entitled ‘ Curiosities of Literature ;’ it was chiefly compiled from the French ‘ ana,’ and contained the fiction on Cervantes.” Mr. Disraeli’s reply is not less amusing or less characteristic. He has literally not one word to say in his own defence ; he cannot deny that he got the story from the “ Ménagiana,” or that he printed it without taking the smallest pains to investigate its truth. Having no case, as usual, he contents himself with abusing his critic. The reader is treated with a long diatribe against Mr. Bolton Corney, seasoned with *gros sel*. There is plenty about “ petty tricks ” and “ artful suppressions ” — phrases which most readers will think more applicable to the plagiarist than to the critic who detects him ; but of the charge itself, all that Mr. Disraeli can find to say is, that “ Cervantes gave freedom to his genius during his captivity ;” which is, perhaps, the lamest defence of a palpably stupid story ever invented. It is, perhaps, the best proof of the justice of Mr. Bolton Corney’s criticism to find that in the later editions of the “ Curiosities ” this fable is expunged.

Unfortunately, as much cannot be said for the next charge. In the first volume of the edition of the “ Curiosities ” published in 1858, “ with a Memoir and Notes by the Right Hon. Benjamin Disraeli ” (the present Earl of Beaconsfield), pp. 194-5, will be found the following paragraph :—

Philip III. was *gravely seated* by the fireside : the fire-maker of the

Court had kindled so great a quantity of wood that the monarch was nearly suffocated with heat, and his *grandeur* would not suffer him to rise from the chair ; the *domestics* could not *presume* to enter the apartment, because it (? what) was against the *étiquette*. At length the Marquis de Potat appeared, and the King ordered him to damp the fire ; but he excused himself, alleging that he was forbidden by the *étiquette* to perform such a function, for which the Duke d'Ussada (*sic*) ought to be called upon, as it was his business. The Duke was gone out ; the *fire* burnt fiercer, and the *King* endured it rather than derogate from his *dignity*. But his blood was heated to such a degree that an erysipelas of the head appeared the next day, which, succeeded by a violent fever, carried him off in 1621, in the twenty-fourth year of his reign.

Except for the last word, which in the early editions of the "Curiosities" is given as "age," this paragraph—slipshod style, grammatical and other blunders, italics and all—is identical with that of the first edition of this well-known book. The result is that this ineffably stupid story has become one of the stock illustrations of English authorcraft, used about as often as Lord Macaulay's wearisome "New Zealander" and "every schoolboy." Yet it is not for want of correction that the tale has retained its present shape. Mr. Bolton Corney points out that when Philip III. of Spain died he was in his forty-third year, and not, as Mr. Disraeli had said, in his twenty-fourth ; that though it is well established that he died from erysipelas, there is not a shadow of foundation for the story which Mr. Disraeli tells ; and that, as a matter of fact, the story itself is due, not to Spanish history, but to the liveliness of certain French memoir writers. Mr. Disraeli's reply is of a piece with the rest of his pamphlet. He cannot deny that he has blundered in the matter of the king's age ; but he refers to that not very recondite source, "L'Art de Vérifier les Dates," as his authority for the story. It is given in that book, by the way, in a very

different form from that of Mr. Disraeli, and if he had really gone to it for information he could not possibly have fallen into error about the king's age. The evidence clearly seems to prove that the story came from a French source, and that the reference to "L'Art de Vérifier les Dates" was an afterthought. The conclusion of his reply on this point is certainly sufficiently amusing, when we bear in mind those amenities of his preface to which reference has already been made.

I am at a loss to comprehend (he says) how this mole, who is very capable to grub, thus hardly ventured to a positive denial of this anecdote of Spanish etiquette. His criticism is nonsense; and, unhappily for him, the style in which it is expressed is even more remarkable than usual for its vulgar arrogance and thoroughly ungentlemanlike style.

The eighteenth count of this lengthy indictment is a very telling one. Mr. Disraeli, professing to quote from a manuscript in the Ashmolean Museum, gives a copy of a summons to Stowe to attend a meeting of the Antiquarian Society. This document he promises to "preserve with all its verbal ærugo." As originally given by Mr. Disraeli the summons runs thus:—

SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES.

To Mr. Stowe,—

The place appointed for a Conference upon the question followinge ys at Mr. Carter's House, on Frydaye the 11th of this November, 1598, being Al Sowle's day, at 11 of the clocke in the afternoone, where your oppinioun in wrytinge or otherwise is expected. The question is: "Of the Antiquitie, Etimologie, and Priviledges, of Parishes in Englande."

It is, perhaps, hardly necessary to point out that there is something very much out of joint in this summons. "Al Sowle's day" is the 2nd and not the 11th of November; and by "11 of the clocke in the

afternoon" Mr. Garter King-at-Arms, and all good antiquarians of 1598, would naturally be in their beds. The solution of the mystery is, however, not very remote; and Mr. Bolton Corney not unnaturally triumphs over his antagonist in pointing out that Mr. Disraeli never saw the original summons to Stowe at all, and that his talk about the "verbal ærugo" is a mere flourish. What he really did was to copy from another antiquary, and to do so without intelligence. Thomas Hearne had published this identical letter in 1720, and, unfortunately for Mr. Isaac Disraeli, had printed it in black-letter—that common trap for the unwary. The result is that the date and hour of the meeting are printed by Hearne thus—ii ; and Mr. Disraeli innocently copied what he found, and blundered in the copying. To make matters worse, Hearne does not give the year at all; and this Mr. Disraeli supplies by guess, giving, as a matter of course, the wrong year. Had he referred to his favourite "*Art de Vérifier les Dates*" he could scarcely have made the mistake. It is hardly necessary to say that Mr. Disraeli was compelled to admit that he had made a mistake "in transcribing from the black-letter," thus admitting the gravest part of the charge against him; nor is it necessary to add that he makes bitter complaint of Mr. Bolton Corney's "silly facetiousness and vulgar insolence." In the later editions of the "*Curiosities*," however, the mistakes are corrected, though Mr. Disraeli never had the candour to withdraw the statement of his having consulted the Ashmolean manuscript.

A minute analysis of the remaining counts of Mr. Bolton Corney's indictment of Mr. Isaac Disraeli would, perhaps, be somewhat tedious; but a few points may be thought worthy of attention. We have seen how

the author of the “Curiosities” comments upon his opponent’s “silly facetiousness.” Mr. Bolton Corney, by anticipation, dwells upon the senile humour of Mr. Disraeli, who, in relating the discovery of the law of gravitation, mentions that it was due to the fall of an apple, which “struck him (Newton) a smart blow on the head,” and surprised him “by the force of its stroke.” How any such childish anecdote can be called a “curiosity of literature”—unless, indeed, its appearance in a book of criticism can be so considered—has never yet been explained. Mr. Disraeli himself appears to have shared the opinion of his critics; for the story has long disappeared from the “Curiosities,” though not until it had done yeoman’s service in manuals of popular science and similar works. For the story itself, Mr. Bolton Corney has done quite enough, when he shows, by a host of authorities, that in its main incident it is at least doubtful, and that the circumstances with which Mr. Disraeli has embellished it were wholly fictitious. To such a charge it is no answer—as Mr. Disraeli seems to have supposed—to say that the story is “a family tradition,” or that “some inverted commas have dropped in the later editions of the “Curiosities of Literature,” whilst the coarse personal abuse of Mr. Bolton Corney hardly benefits its author.

Again : Mr. Disraeli asserts that “Collins burnt his Odes at the door of his publisher.” On this point Mr. Bolton Corney shows that, although it is quite true that a portion of the impression of Collins’s Odes was burned by the indignant author, the event happened not through the poet’s “misery,” but because of his anger at the popular neglect, and some considerable time after his accession to fortune. The “door of the

publisher" is a pure invention of Mr. Disraeli, and is worthy of no attention whatever. Finally, in more than one place Mr. Disraeli puts himself forward as in some sense the "discoverer" of Oldys, the antiquarian, and constantly refers to his manuscripts. Mr. Bolton Corney is, however, able to show that, in truth, Mr. Disraeli knew little, if anything, of Oldys at first hand, but was really indebted for what knowledge he possessed to Grose's confessedly imperfect and valueless book. Mr. Disraeli's only answer to this charge is a little raillery of the heaviest type.

The sting of Mr. Bolton Corney's pamphlet lies in its tail. The penultimate chapter, which is written in a strain of acute and even brilliant sarcasm, is entitled "Masterly Imitators," and gives a tolerably clear idea of the way in which the greater part of the "Curiosities" was composed. Mr. Bolton Corney assorts the Disraelitic method under three heads—"Transcription, Translation, and Conversion." Under the first he gives a passage from Gilpin, side by side with a passage from the "Curiosities," from which we are to suppose that the "inverted commas have dropped out." The two passages are all but identical, the only difference being such a change of one or two words as might readily happen in copying. A second specimen of the same kind is even more audaciously impudent. In the "Journal" of Sir Simonds d'Ewes, which was published by Nichols the antiquary in 1793, appears a short passage relating to the Duke of Buckingham. This passage Mr. Disraeli coolly appropriates, modernizing the spelling, and announcing that he had "discovered" it in the "*unpublished*" (*sic*) life of Sir Symonds d'Ewes (*sic*). Of Mr. Disraeli's knack of translating, Mr. Bolton Corney gives two specimens,

which plainly prove not merely that the illustrious *littérateur* was not above stealing wherever *il trouvait son bon*, but that he was also not above following the gipsy precedent, and disfiguring the child he stole. The specimen of "conversion" which follows is of the same character, and shows Mr. Disraeli, in a curiously unenviable light, as a plagiarist of the first water.

The last chapter is an attack upon literary *camaraderie*—a kind of thing which is unfortunately not yet wholly extinct. The form which it took in Mr. Disraeli's case consisted mainly in a number of highly laudatory paragraphs addressed to him by certain more or less well-known men of letters of the day, and repaid by him in kind. Mr. Disraeli's reply to this attack is amusingly characteristic. He makes no attempt to answer the really grave charges brought against him, but, as usual, he befogs the whole matter with a cloud of abuse. The chapters, he says, "consist merely of impertinence addressed not only to myself, but to many distinguished literary characters, couched in language characteristic of a petty and envious mind." What this has to do with the accusation that Mr. Disraeli had "borrowed" by wholesale from the French collectors of "ana" and writers of memoirs is not easy to see, but the reply seems to have satisfied its author. He then goes on to taunt Mr. Bolton Corney with certain literary work, which he assumes to have been a failure, and he concludes by saying: "We know how Ritson would have treated Corney; borrowing the thunder of Milton, as he once did, he would have told him that he did

‘ABOMINATE THE CENSURE OF ‘RASCALS.’’”

With this vigorous denunciation, in all its emphasis

of type, Mr. Disraeli quits the field of controversy, boasting that he has not left his critic "a leg to stand on." Strangely enough, Mr. Bolton Corney refused to admit himself defeated, and altogether declined to regard Mr. Disraeli's answer as final. He therefore published the pamphlet "Ideas on Criticism," to which reference has already been made. In it he sarcastically enumerates the various principles by which Mr. Disraeli may be assumed to have been governed in the controversy. The performance is remarkably clever and really excellent reading. Its style may best be guessed from one characteristic extract :—

Idea xxv. It is consolatory to believe that "every work must be judged by its design." And now, Mr. Disraeli, I shall epitomise the rules of controversy, as deduced from your latest work—the "Illustrator Illustrated." You may ascribe the meanest motive to your opponent, without the shadow of authority ; you may misstate facts with reckless effrontery ; you may introduce falsified and fictitious quotations ; you may have recourse to the most contemptible evasion ; you may abuse with all the virulence of a charlatan who has been unexpectedly deprived of his mask—if the *design* of your work is "*to assert the dignity of your station.*"

These last words are a quotation from Mr. Disraeli, and they may almost be held to justify the savage quotation from Porson, with which this pamphlet and the controversy are alike brought to an end. "It is not," said the great Grecian, and after him Mr. Bolton Corney—"it is not in the power of thought to conceive, or words to express, the contempt I have for you, Mr. Isaac Disraeli."

NOTE.—It may be as well to add the reason for the animosity between Porson and Isaac Disraeli. They were on one occasion dining at the house of a common friend. Porson, in accordance with his almost invariable custom, got excessively drunk, and, when lying

prostrate on the floor, Disraeli delivered a burlesque oration over him, holding him up to ridicule and contempt. When Porson was sobered, some good-natured friend told him of what had happened, whereupon he made use of the expression quoted above, which in due course was conveyed to Disraeli. Disraeli shortly afterwards published his very disagreeable novel, "Flim Flams," in the course of which a great deal of sarcasm and abuse are levelled at Porson, whose only answer was the repetition of his contempt for his assailant.

## DR. DIBDIN AND THE ROXBURGHE CLUB.

BIBLIOMANIA, or as the accomplished historian of the reign of Queen Anne prefers to call it, "Book Hunting," is one of those forms of amiable lunacy which those who are afflicted by it are accustomed to exalt into a virtue, and about which they talk as though it embodied the sum of all human happiness and human endeavour. Other forms of delusion have a certain amount of intelligibility in them, but for bibliomania it is impossible to find a feasible explanation. The genuine bibliomaniac cares nothing for the contents of the books which he buys and hoards.<sup>1</sup> His greatest pride is, indeed, in an uncut copy; while, if only a book be unique, he is in no wise troubled by its imbecility or coarseness. The student looks upon books as engines of thought and culture; the bibliomaniac is occupied with the width of the margin, or the important question whether the title-page is printed in black ink, or whether the name of the author is inserted in red. If he is curious in editions, it is not because successive issues of a popular book display the growth of the author's mind, or because the later state his case with greater precision and effect, but because, perhaps, ten copies of the first were printed upon large paper, or because the second contains a trivial misprint.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Canning used to tell a story of Mr. Dent—a bibliomaniac of the true Dibdin type—whom he once caught with a book before him “upside down.”

Of book-hunters of this type, Dr. Thomas Frognall Dibdin was one of the most pronounced, and he added to his character as a bibliomaniac that of author. Unlike the race of authors in general, however, he took all possible pains to make his books scarce. They were almost without exception published at high prices, and in the most sumptuous form ; the numbers were strictly limited, and the author records with pride the fact that before they had long been published they brought more in the open market than he had received from the subscribers. Those who have had the courage to wade through these vast folios will perhaps be apt to wonder how it has happened that Dr. Dibdin should have made so great a reputation, and that his books should be sought after as they are. It is true that he is learned in title-pages, and in all the mysteries of typography ; but if his books had been published in the ordinary way, it is doubtful whether they would have sold at all ; for, to say the truth, Dibdin is one of the worst of writers. He cannot even spell correctly—unless, indeed, his printers were more stupid than printers generally are—and his style is painfully pompous, stilted, and lumbering. His jokes are incessant, and remind the reader of nothing so much as of the gambols of an infantile elephant. His egotism is insufferable, whilst the perpetual introduction of his friends and patrons, sometimes under their own names, and sometimes under affected pseudonyms drawn from the classics, reveals a very curious state of mind alike in himself and in those who were the objects of his fulsome flattery. Relating in one book the genesis of a not particularly interesting passage of another, he tells how he read to one of his patrons the character which he had given of him under an

assumed name. The picture which is thus presented is not altogether an agreeable one, though a cynic might find a malicious pleasure in the spectacle of an elderly gentleman purring with self-satisfaction, whilst the "illustrious bibliographer" read to him four pages of egregious flattery.

It is in this scene, however, that the clue to Dr. Dibdin's popularity and reputation may be found. He was the head and chief of a great mutual admiration society. He flattered a number of influential and titled personages in the fashion which they found most agreeable, and they repaid his adulation by subscribing largely for the volumes in which it was enshrined, and by even more solid proofs of their gratification. Lord Spencer, for example, presented him to the living of Exning, near Newmarket, very early in his ecclesiastical career. For his own reasons, Dibdin habitually spoke of Exning as a "small" affair, but it was of the value of over 400*l.* a year, with a house, and as the population was small, Dibdin chose to be non-resident. His country living was thus a very comfortable addition to his income, and it afforded him besides an agreeable rural retreat for the summer and autumn. In addition to Exning, Dibdin had the good fortune to obtain, through the influence of the same noble patron, the living of St. Mary's, Bryanston Square—one of the four district parishes into which the ancient rectory of St. Marylebone was divided—while, as salaried librarian at Althorp, he was long employed upon the production of a magnificent catalogue of the books under his charge. It was, however, in connexion with the Roxburghe Club that Dibdin's reputation was chiefly won, and as that club, with almost every one of its members, has passed away, it may be as well to spend

a few pages upon the question of how far its existence was of benefit to literature.

Dibdin's life began amidst strange vicissitudes. His father, who entered the navy when very young, was the original "Tom Bowling" of his brother Charles Dibdin's famous song. Barker, the friend of Porson, who records this circumstance, mentions also, what is not generally known, and is certainly very unusual, that Charles Dibdin was twenty-nine years younger than his less famous brother, and that his mother, whose eighteenth child he was, was fifty years of age at the time of his birth. Thomas Dibdin entered the navy when almost a child, and saw a good deal of active service; but when the long peace which preluded the European convulsion of 1789 sent him into compulsory retirement, he placed himself at the disposal of the East India Company, by whom he was employed in various negotiations with the native princes. Being a somewhat simple-minded person—a sailor rather than a diplomatist—it is not surprising that his business relations with the astute agents of the Company, and the still more astute native princes, produced him little profit, and that after a prolonged service he was still a poor man. On his way home he was seized with illness, which terminated fatally on his reaching the Cape. His widow stayed just long enough to see him buried, and then, taking passage in a Dutch East Indiaman, sailed with her infant son to Europe. She arrived at Middelburg, in the island of Zeeland, early in 1780, and her child, then about three years old, was brought to England by a certain Captain Smith, of whom Dibdin was in after-life wont to complain that he had charged too much for his services, and that he had ruined his health by making him drink

undiluted Schiedam. Arrived in England, the child was placed under the care of a younger brother of his mother, a Mr. William Compton, who, in some indistinct way, claimed alliance with the illustrious family of Northampton. Mr. Compton transferred him to the care of an elderly great aunt, who lived at Reading, a town which Dibdin, oddly enough, calls "the capital of Berkshire." This aunt was indebted to the estate of the late Thomas Dibdin, and in liquidation of her debt, undertook to bring up the child in the cheapest possible manner. She sent him to a trumpery boarding school in Reading, and vindicated her economical character by supplying him with a single suit of clothes *per annum*.

In the curious, and not very pleasant, volume of "Reminiscences," which Dibdin put forth in 1836, he expends a considerable amount of space on his school days; but he has really little more to say about them than that he was so sickly a child as to cause his master's wife to doubt "whether he would live to see the morning's light," and that he was fond of books from his earliest days. His master—Mr. John Man, whose son figures so frequently in Lamb's life and letters—was wont to buy old books in great quantity, and young Dibdin was allowed to amuse himself with them. In process of time he was removed to another school—this time at Stockwell—and here he "fell more and more into bookish ways." It is hardly necessary to say that, like most clever lads, he imagined himself a poet. What is really remarkable is that, at sixty years of age, he should have fancied his boyish imitations of Granger and Denham worth reproducing in all the glory of an *édition de luxe*. Had he been blessed with a sense of humour, he would hardly have inflicted

on readers of mature age some hundred or so of lines like the following :—

Lead me, my Muse, to Richmond's tow'ring hill,  
Where endless plains the mind with transport fill.  
“Heavens, what a goodly prospect spreads around !  
With trees, and lawns, and bow'rs, and winding riv'lets crown'd.”  
Yon distant hills aspiring to the skies—  
And the whole view in glowing grandeur lies.

*K. T. L.*

From Stockwell, Dibdin went to Oxford, where he was entered of St. John's. The choice was a somewhat singular one, since then, as now, the honours of the college were practically monopolized by men from Merchant Taylor's school. Under such circumstances, Dibdin found Oxford what probably few men have found it since—an exceedingly dull place. Chapel and lecture were the only claims upon his attention, and provided he made a perfunctory use of the opportunities which they afforded to him, he was left to his own devices. Happily, his inclinations were innocent enough, lying, as they did chiefly in the direction of desultory reading and the making of indifferent verses. Some of his friends and associates had the same tastes, and they met from time to time to read papers and make speeches. The authorities refused them permission to meet outside the college walls, out of a dread lest the proposed “Society for Literary and Scientific Discussion” should become a propaganda of “Jacobinical principles,” but they did not interfere with meetings within the college. The society of “Academics” flourished accordingly, and many men who afterwards attained eminence joined it. The faster set nicknamed them “Lunatics,” and, on the whole, they did not object to the title. “Mad, indeed,

we were," said Dibdin forty years later, "and desired to be so called, if an occasional deviation from dull and hard-drinking, frivolous gossip, and Boëotian uproar could justify that appellation."

In spite of his love of literature, Dibdin left Oxford without taking a degree. For a time he found occupation in attending the sittings of the Court of King's Bench at the Guildhall, attracted thither by the forensic eloquence of Erskine, Mingay, Law (afterwards Lord Ellenborough), Dallas, and Garrow, all of whom were at the height of their fame at the time. A chance word from Erskine determined Dibdin to embrace the legal profession, and in due course he was entered of Lincoln's Inn, and placed in the chambers of the celebrated Basil Montagu. For some time he wrestled with the intricacies of legal procedure—much more trying eighty years ago than in these simpler days—and at the expiration of his term of pupilage he established himself at Worcester as a provincial counsel, though he had not been called to the bar. His business appears to have consisted in "settling" deeds and marriage-settlements for local attorneys; but he does not seem to have had very much to do, and a chance meeting with an old schoolfellow, who had taken orders, gave a new bias to his inclinations. "Henceforward," he says, "he could think of nothing but literature and the Church." He plunged into his new pursuit with characteristic ardour. His law books were sold, and the shelves were re-filled with volumes of controversial and dogmatic theology, which, by his own account, he studied day and night.

One difficulty stood in the way of his obtaining ordination—his want of a degree. At first he hoped to dispense with it, but Bishop Hurd was obdurate;

and accordingly he went into residence for a term at Oxford, took his degree, and was ordained deacon by the Bishop of Winchester in 1804. Three months later—on the 10th of March, 1805—he received priest's orders, the curtailment of the usual period of probation being due to his literary reputation. Some time before he had published an “Introduction to the Classics,” which dealt with certain questions of editions and MSS., and as this work had already reached a second edition, the bishop's examining chaplain thought it unnecessary to trouble him with more than formal questions. The only one he asked was as to whether Dibdin “felt satisfied that the ‘Codex Vaticanus’ was of the fifth century.” “I replied,” says Dibdin, “that my opinion necessarily rested upon those of the authorities whom I had quoted. He said he was quite satisfied.” The story suggests the apocryphal one of the student who passed in divinity at Oxford, on giving the meaning of the word Golgotha; but it must be admitted that it is more honourable both to examiner and candidate.

At this point, Dibdin fairly embarked on his career as author. Though he was never absolutely a careless clergyman, it is not unfair to say that his clerical character sat very lightly upon him. He was a popular preacher, and a bookworm of the highest order; but the restless activity of the modern parish priest, with his perpetual round of services, schools, clothing clubs, charitable societies, mothers' meetings, and the rest of the paraphernalia of a “well-worked” parish were wholly out of his habit of life. If, however, he did not labour too hard in his vocation, the Church did not on her part overpay him. “For nineteen years,” he tells us, “I continued my career as alternate morning

preacher, with an evening lectureship, to which the salary of only 30*l.* was attached." The congregation of the Brompton Church made up for him an annual purse of about the same sum; but the stipend was, as he complains, miserable at the best, though "quite in accordance," as he is careful to add, "with the usual stipends of the day." Under the circumstances, literature was a very natural resource; and Dibdin certainly made some, though, at this time, not very large addition to his income from it. For example, he received 30*l.* from a bookseller for a guide-book to Cheltenham, and other small sums for little works of the same kind. Then we hear of him as editor, in conjunction with Sir Robert Ker Porter, the painter of the extraordinary picture of the battle of Agincourt, lately exhibited in the Guildhall, of a magazine with the unhappy title of *The Quiz*. What it was like, nobody seems to know; but a correspondent of "Notes and Queries" throws some doubt on both the date and Dibdin's editorship. The matter is not of much consequence, seeing that the paper lived for but one year, and that none of its contents have at any time been reprinted.

Dibdin's poems were published at this date, much, without doubt, to the advantage of the printer; and some other attempts at authorcraft followed—"Analises (*sic*) of Blackstone," and the like. He speaks also of a poem on Vaccination, written under the inspiration of a friendship for Jenner, the loss of which he laments much more pathetically than his readers are likely to do. His "Introduction to the Classics"—or rather the second edition of that work—was his principal occupation. At first little more than a bookseller's catalogue, and based upon an earlier and forgotten work by Harwood, it grew under his hands from a little

manual of some seventy-five pages to a goodly octavo of 600, with four illustrations. There is something *naïve* and characteristic in his satisfaction with the work. "I cannot now," he says, "remember what were my gains, but I can remember that when the first copy of it (bound by Herring, in morocco, with gilt leaves) was brought to me, I thought all my toil abundantly remunerated by the very appearance of the volume. No parent on the birth of his offspring could have felt a more heart-swelling delight; or, rather, not even Cardinal Ximenes himself, when he received the first perfect copy of his Polyglot Bible at the hands of the younger Brocario, could have experienced more gratifying sensations than I did at the moment in question." It is rather melancholy to think how very many times Cardinal Ximenes and his Polyglot Bible have figured in the tales of an author's raptures over his first printed work.

In its way this book was very successful. The first edition was exhausted in a short time; and a second, third, and fourth followed in the course of a few years. The best thing that it did for the author was, however, to procure him an engagement to deliver three courses of lectures on the "Rise and Progress of English Literature"—twenty-eight in all—at the Royal Institution, in Albemarle Street. Whilst these lectures were in progress, Dibdin became editor of a little magazine called the *Director*, which lived from January to July, 1807. Amongst the principal contributors were Sir Thomas Bernard, Sir George Beaumont, Prince Hoare, and a couple of clergymen, named Crowe and Collinson respectively. The *Director* was, to say the truth, a dull little print; and the four articles which Dibdin especially prides himself

upon are neither more nor less than indifferent imitations of the *Spectator*. There was, however, a series of notes and memoranda on subjects connected with books, to which Dibdin gave the title of "Bibliographiana," and which possess a certain special interest as forming the germ of a work which he afterwards published under the title of "Bibliomania."

The circumstances connected with the publication of this book are not altogether without interest. It would seem that in 1809, a Dr. Ferriar published under this title a rhyming epistle in heroic couplets, which Dibdin describes as "a smart and clever performance, but rather to be considered as a sort of dessert after dinner." Accordingly, he proposed to treat the subject in a graver and "more substantial" manner, and wrote a book, as he says, *calamo currentissimo*. It was the work of a month, and it produced for the author as much as defrayed his housekeeping bills for a week. "The publishers," he says, "were Messrs. Longman and Co. The book was sold for 3s. 6d., the author and publishers dividing the profits. The advertisements amounted to the astounding sum of 35*l.*!! The *spolia opima* were somewhat under 8*l.*! of which I necessarily took possession of *half*. Here was AUTHORSHIP!" Two years later the subject revived. Dibdin had lost his younger son under very painful circumstances, and he turned to this work for consolation. The former edition was thrown to the winds; and, under the old title, a perfectly novel work was projected. It became what its author is pleased to style a Bibliographical Romance—a series of desultory lectures, that is to say, interspersed with dialogues by living personages, thinly disguised under such names as Lysander, Philemon, Lisardo, Belinda, and Almanza. Amongst the persons

thus introduced were George Chalmers, Sir M. M. Sykes, Richard Heber, Tom Warton, Joseph Haslewood, Edward Malone, Francis Douce, Sir Walter Scott, Joseph Ritson, the antiquary, and Dibdin himself, who figures under two or three disguises. The Romance is divided into six parts:— 1. The Evening Walk, during which the right uses of Literature are discussed; 2. The Cabinet, containing an outline of Foreign and Domestic Bibliography; 3. The Auction-Room, with a Dissertation on the character of Orlando (i. e., Richard Heber), and an essay on the ancient prices of Books and Bookbinding; 4, The Library, with an account of a dinner at Lorenzo's, and some particulars relating to book collectors in England; 5. The Drawing-Room, in which the History of Bibliomania is resumed and concluded; and 6. The Alcove, in which the symptoms of the disease are discussed, and probable means of cure suggested. A Supplement and three Indexes were added, and the whole was published on small paper at 27*s*. Eighteen copies were printed on large paper, each of which found a purchaser at ten guineas. These last have since fetched much higher prices on account of their scarcity and of their beauty as specimens of typography and engraving. Thirty years after their first publication they brought as much as thirty guineas apiece, while within the last few years a copy in fine condition sold for fifty. The small-paper copies also command a great price. Some few dozen have the word "Bibliomania" on the title-page in red ink, and, according to Lowndes, they fetch at sales as much as 8*l.* 8*s*. More recently the book has been reprinted, and the price of these last has, in consequence, fallen off.

From the first the book was successful. It contains

a great amount of information, and also—as an outspoken critic remarks—a “vast deal of nonsense;” but it is marred by many grievous defects of style and taste, by the author’s persistent egotism, and by an abominable habit, in which Dibdin is fond of indulging, of putting at least one-half of his book into the notes. To these defects, however, the bibliographical students of the day paid no attention. They hurried instead to overwhelm the author with compliments. Mr. Isaac Disraeli, from his retreat in the “King’s Road, Bedford Row,” sent a letter of profuse thanks for “one of the most extraordinary gratifications he had enjoyed for many years,” and declared that the book “had made him return with ardour to a favourite bibliographical scheme at which he had long been labouring.” Mr. Douce, ever the most amiable and courteous of antiquarians, declared that Dibdin had “put an additional ten per cent. on his gratitude for his friendship and kindness in all respects.” Sir Egerton Brydges swelled the chorus with a letter written in that curiously affected English which antiquarians of Dibdin’s class appear to think the height of humour. Even the reviewers, for whom, as a body, Dibdin entertained a very author-like detestation, were more than kind in their notices of the book. The most remarkable testimony to its success is, however, to be found in the sudden impulse which it gave to the pursuit of bibliography. Dibdin’s enthusiasm set the fashion, and though none of his contemporaries had, like him, the purses of wealthy amateurs upon which to draw, they bought eagerly at the sales which from time to time took place, so that the possessors of really fine and rare books found the value of their property multiplied manyfold. It was not long before the great library of the Duke of Rox-

burghe was brought to the hammer, and Dibdin declares his belief that he is uttering only the "sober truth" when he states that the sale benefited to the extent of 5000*l.* by the opportune publication of his book.

The story of this sale is told by Dibdin in the work by which he is best known—the "Bibliographical Decameron." As usual, however, the learned Doctor cannot tell a plain tale in a plain way, so overloads his pages with the raptures of an enthusiasm which it is hard to believe altogether unaffected, and so piles notes and comments upon his text, that the reader who goes for actual information to this book finds considerable difficulty in understanding what took place. Reduced to its elements, the matter is simple enough. The Duke of Roxburghe inherited a fine library, a strong taste for bibliography, and a fortune which enabled him to indulge his predilections without stint. He was an omnivorous collector, and his agents had orders to buy up for him all that was best and rarest in the book-market. He was almost regardless of cost, and when he made his appearance in the auction-room, his enthusiasm often led him to pay outrageous prices for books of very small intrinsic value. Dibdin in several places tells a story of his being at an auction at which the price of a coveted book had mounted up to a point far beyond its real value. The Duke's agent asked for further instructions, and was answered in the words of Macbeth, "Lay on, Macduff, and damned be he that first cries 'hold, enough!'" When the library came to be sold, the bibliomaniacal enthusiasm was at its height, and the prices realized would have reconciled its late owner to the dispersion of his collection. Thus, a copy of

the first edition of Shakespeare, for which the Duke had given 35*l.*, sold for 100*l.*, and the collection of curious old ballads, in three large folio volumes, which is now in the British Museum, brought 477*l.* 15*s.* The great feature of the sale was of course the well-known contest for the “*Valdarfar Boccaccio*.” Dibdin’s pompous and foolish account of this contest has been so frequently quoted that it is unnecessary to repeat it here. All that need be said is that the copy of the work was bought by Lord Spencer for no less a sum than 2260*l.* How utterly this fantastic price was a matter of fashion may be estimated from the fact that when, a few years later, the book was sold again, it brought no more than 785*l.*

Interesting in itself, the sale becomes doubly interesting from the fact that it was the moving cause of the foundation of the Roxburghe Club. The first glimpse of this much-talked-of institution is afforded in a passage of the third volume of the “*Bibliographical Decameron*,” in which Dibdin describes, in his usual florid style, a dinner-party at the house of “Hortensius”—Mr., afterwards Baron, Bolland—on the night of the 4th of June, 1813. It is worthy of note that in his “*Reminiscences*,” Dibdin, who is always repeating his own stories, puts the date of this banquet as the 16th of June. The description of this dinner occupies some forty pages of not the easiest reading in the world, as will be seen by the following sentence. After describing the Library of Hortensius, Dibdin goes on: “Nor is the hospitality of the owner of these treasures of a less quality and calibre than his taste; for Hortensius regaleth liberally—and as the ‘night and day champagnes’ (so he is pleased humorously to call them) sparkle upon his Gottingen

manufactured table cloth, ‘the master of the revels,’ or (to borrow the phraseology of Pynson) of the ‘feste royalle’ discourses lustily and loudly upon the charms—not of a full-curled, or full-bottomed ‘King’s Bench’ periwig—but of a full-margined Bartholomaeus, or Barclay like his own.” It must be owned that forty folio pages of this sort of elaborate trifling become rather tedious. At last, however, we see land in a sentence which, for Dibdin, is tolerably lucid, and which describes his proposal “that we should not only be all present if possible, on the day of the sale of the ‘Boccaccio,’ but that we should meet at some ‘faire taverne’ to commemorate the sale thereof.” The place selected was the “St. Alban’s Tavern, in St. Alban’s Street, now Waterloo Place,”—a well-known house of entertainment upon the site of which the old Athenæum Club was afterwards built. The dinner took place in due course, Dibdin being the guiding spirit of the affair, and occupying the vice-chair, whilst Lord Spencer presided.

Out of this dinner sprang the Roxburghe Club, which for many years met to dine on the 17th of June, in commemoration of the sale of the “Valdarfar Boccaccio.” On the first occasion eighteen dined; on the second and third anniversaries the number was increased to thirty-one, which was fixed as the maximum. It was one of the most exclusive bodies in existence. One black ball excluded a candidate, and the number being so very limited, vacancies were of very infrequent occurrence. There is, however, reason for something more than doubt as to the desirability of belonging to it. Had Dibdin alone chronicled its doings, the world might have remained under the impression that it was a grave and decorous assemblage

of gentlemen and scholars, bent solely upon promoting the interests of letters. Unfortunately for its reputation the Club numbered amongst its members a certain Joseph Haslewood, who wrote, for his own diversion, a chronicle of its proceedings. This Haslewood was a person of extremely humble origin—according to Dibdin, he was born in the lying-in-hospital in Brownlow Street—and his education corresponded with his birth. By a series of accidents, he was brought into the clique which afterwards formed the Roxburghe Club, and when it was founded he was admitted to it, and entrusted with the editorship of some of its publications, though he was one of the most ignorant men in existence. At Haslewood's death his books were sold, and amongst them was a manuscript volume to which he had given the following title:—“Roxburghe Revels; or, an Account of Annual Display Culinary and Festivious, interspersed incidentally with Matters of Moment or Merriment. Also brief notices of the Press Proceedings by a few Lions of Literature, combined as the Roxburghe Club, founded 17th June, 1812.” The title-page gives a fair idea of the book itself. Dibdin, indeed, talks of it as “the concoction of one in his gayer and unsuspecting moments—the repository of private confidential communications—a mere memorandum of what had passed at convivial meetings, and in which ‘winged words’ and flying notes of merry gentlemen and friends were obviously incorporated.” Even Dibdin, though he thinks “his friend's style delectably original,” finds himself compelled to reprehend the more preposterous of Haslewood's blunders. “He (Haslewood) was,” he says, “amazingly fond of fine words in his written compositions, and misapplied them in a manner never exceeded

by the antiquated Mrs. Slipslop, or her modern imitator Mrs. Malaprop :—an important work was always ‘consequential’ and an unimportant one ‘inconsequential ;’ a reference was generally ‘allusional’ and sometimes ‘allusive ;’ a book seldom met with was ‘infrequential,’ and tracts corresponding in subject were ‘anomalous.’” Yet this exceptionally stupid man became the real historian of the Roxburghe Club, and it is from his pages that we obtain the clearest idea of what was really done by a literary society of the highest pretensions and most exclusive character.

For many years the proceedings of these “Lions of Literature” were confined to the annual dinner, the invitation to which was, according to Dibdin, sent out by the landlord of the tavern at which it was held. It must, however, have taken a Haslewood to invent such a sentence as “The honour of your company is requested to dine with the Roxburghe dinner on Wednesday, the 17th inst.,” which was the common form of the club. The dinners themselves were somewhat astonishing. The men of the last generation must, indeed, have possessed heads of abnormal hardness, and digestions of extraordinary strength, if they could endure many such “feeds” as are recorded in these pages. To the more fastidious taste of to-day the dinners seem to have been rather unpleasant orgies, with a good deal more drunkenness than would be tolerated in modern society. Thus one of the events which Haslewood deems worthy of record is his having been compelled to “leave the room very early from a severe attack of sickness, which appeared to originate in some vile compound partook (*sic*) of at dinner.” On another occasion the Rev. Mr. Dodd (son

of Dodd the actor) was “very volatile and somewhat singular, at the same time quite novel, in amusing the company with Robin Hood ballads and similar productions.” Dibdin, by the way, mentions the same event with the additional fact that it occurred “when the wine had done either its best or its worst.” This state of things may be accounted for by the quantity of food and drink consumed on these occasions. The dinner was always a good one. “Consider,” says Haslewood, in that offensive style of his which makes the “Roxburgh Revels” such tiresome reading,—“Consider, in the bird’s-eye view of the banquet, the trencher cuts, foh! nankeen displays: as intersticed with many a brilliant drop to friendly beck and clubbish hail, to moisten the viands or cool the incipient cayenne. No unfamished livery-man would desire better dishes, or high-tasted courtier better wines. With men that meet to commune, that can converse, and each willing to give and receive information, more could not be wanting to promote well-tempered conviviality—a social compound of mirth, wit, and wisdom; combining all that Anacreon was famed for, tempered with the reason of Demosthenes, and intersected with the archness of Scaliger.” After the dinner, thus pleasantly interrupted with continual challenges to “take wine” after the manner of half a century ago, came the toasts, of which Haslewood gives the following list.

### The Order of Pe Costes.

The Immortal Memory of  
 John, Duke of Roxburghe.  
 Christopher Valdarke, Printer of the Decameron of  
 1471.

Gutemburg, Fust and Schoeffher, the Inventors of  
the Art of Printing.

William Caxton, the Father of the British Press.  
Dame Juliana Berners and the St. Alban's Press,  
Wynkyn de Worde and Richard Pynson, the Illus-  
trious successors of William Caxton.

The Aldine Family at Venice.

The Giunta Family at Florence.

The Society of Bibliophiles at Paris.

The Prosperity of the Roxburghe Club.

The cause of Bibliomania all over the World.\*

These eleven toasts disposed of—with it is to be presumed the addition of those loyal expressions without which no Englishman would consider a public dinner complete—the serious drinking of the evening would set in. Haslewood more than hints at the results. “It is true we had not any long oration denouncing the absentees, the cabinet council, or any other set of men; but there was not a man present that at one hour and seventeen minutes after the cloth was removed, but could have made a Demosthenic speech far superior to any record of antiquity. . . . Ancients believe it! we were not dead drunk.”

This exuberant conviviality grew, instead of diminishing, as time went on. The club began in a fairly modest way with a dinner, costing, with wine, about “2*l.* 5*s.* per man.” On the next occasion, when twenty members sat down, the bill was 57*l.*, or “2*l.* 17*s.* per man.” On this occasion forty-five bottles of wine were consumed, besides “beer and ale,” to the value

\* It is hardly necessary at this time to point out the ridiculous confusion which Haslewood makes between the English “y” and the early English “thorn”—a confusion which has done more to deface eighteenth century tombstones than anything else.

of six shillings. The crowning feast was held in 1818, when fifteen of the "Lions of Literature" made their way eastward as far as the Albion, in Aldersgate Street, and spent 85*l.* 9*s.* 6*d.* on their meal—5*l.* 14*s.*—per "beast," as the *Athenæum* put it. The bill, as given by Haslewood, is perhaps the most remarkable combination of literature and gluttony in existence. The "dinners" are charged 9*l.* 9*s.*—but in addition are to be found such items as "50lb. Turtle, 12*l.* 10*s.*;" "Dressing ditto, 2*l.* 2*s.*;" "Two haunches of Venison, 10*l.* 10*s.*;" "Sweet Sauce and Dressing, 1*l.* 4*s.*;" "Bread and Beer, 9*s.*;" "Cheas and Butter, 9*s.*;" "Desert, 6*l.* 6*s.*;" and "Pine Ice Creams, 1*l.* 16*s.*" The drink included Strong Beer, Maderia, Champagne, Saturne, Old Hoc, Burgundy, Hermitage, Silery, Sherry, St. Percy, Old Port, Turtle Punch, and Claret—the charge for the last item alone being 11*l.* 4*s.*<sup>3</sup>

The fame of these festive gatherings spread far and wide. Indeed, it was not until Haslewood's indiscretions were given to the world that the true character of the club was more than surmised, though in the periodical literature of the period between 1815 and 1837, when Dibdin's apology was given to the world, there are not unfrequently "flouts and gibes and jeers" at the expense of the confraternity. Much of the fame which it has since enjoyed has been due to the association of Sir Walter Scott with it—slight though that association really was. The facts of the matter are simple enough. After about 1820 the anonymity of "the author of 'Waverley'" sat very loosely upon him, and when in 1823 "Peveril of the Peak" was given to the world everybody who was interested in the

<sup>3</sup> The orthography is Haslewood's.

matter had penetrated Scott's disguise. In the epistle introductory to that volume, Clutterbuck amuses Dryasdust with an account of a visit from "the author of 'Waverley,'" who apologized for the excellence of his appetite by alleging that he was in training for the anniversary of the Roxburghe Club. "He was preparing himself to hob-nob with the lords of the literary treasures of Althorpe and Hodnet in Madeira negus, brewed by the classical Dibdin." Lockhart is careful to mention that this pleasantry had reference not to the Roxburghe Club, but to Scott's favourite Bannatyne Club, of which he was founder and first president. Be this as it may, Dibdin, as Secretary of the club, wrote to Scott in these terms:—"The death of Sir M. Sykes having occasioned a vacancy in our club, I am desired to request that you will have the goodness to make that fact known to the Author of 'Waverley,' who, from the 'Proheme' to 'Peveril of the Peak,' seems disposed to become one of the members thereof: and I am further desired to express the wishes of the said club that the said Author may succeed to the said Baronet." Sir Walter's answer was to the effect that he would find means to convey the message to the "author of 'Waverley,'" and he added, as it was of course intended he should do, "as his personal appearance in the fraternity is not likely to be a speedy event the table of the Roxburghe, like that of King Arthur, will have a vacant chair. But if this author, who hath fern seed and walketh invisible, should not appear to claim it before I come to London, with the permission of the club, I, who have something of adventure in me, although a knight like Sir Andrew Aguecheek 'dubbed with unhacked rapier and on carpet consideration,' would, rather than lose the chance of a

dinner with the Roxburghe Club, take upon me the adventure of the *Siege Perilous*, and reap some amends for the perils and scandals into which the invisible champion has drawn me by being his *locum tenens* on so distinguished an occasion," Dibdin, on behalf of the club, eagerly accepted the offer; and Scott, in his reply, protested that he considered his election as a member as "an honour which he valued more than that which had been bestowed upon him by the credit of having written any of the novels." He appears, however, to have dined with the club once only, on which occasion the genial Haslewood reports that "the Giant of the North had his power of amusement damped by the incertitude of the event of the dangerous illness of his grandson." The sitting after dinner lasted for but three hours, when "the Bill was called, and Exit." With that dinner, Sir Walter's association with the Roxburghe Club began and ended.

It is not quite easy to see why Scott should have valued admission to this fraternity so highly, unless, indeed, he were influenced by the reputation for exclusiveness which the Roxburghites so zealously maintained. What the club did besides eating and drinking, extravagantly, at all events, during the first fifteen years of its existence, it would be difficult to say. A tablet to the memory of Caxton was, it is true, ordered with the intention of having it erected in Westminster Abbey, at the cost of the club, but when the site was selected the Roxburghers refused to pay the fees, and the tablet was accordingly relegated to a position over the vestry door of St. Margaret's Church hard by, but the inscription is quite as much to the glory of the club as of the first printer, and its cost was considerably less than that of a single dinner. The services

of the club to literature were insignificant. According to Haslewood, at the second meeting, "it was proposed and concluded for each member of the club to reprint a scarce piece of ancient lore to be given to the members, one copy to be on vellum for the chairman, and only as many copies as members." It unfortunately happened that the publications of the club were of the most ridiculously trivial kind. The first was a "merry-conceited jest" on the part of one of the members, who reprinted a little French tract called "La Contenance de la Table," and disposed it amongst the napkins at the dinner, so that each guest found it in the place of the usual dinner-roll.

It is no matter for wonder that the authorities of literature scoffed at the pretensions of the club. A writer in the *Quarterly Review*, in 1825, is justly severe on the paltriness of the Roxburghe Reprints. "Out of six reprints," he says, "four are as follows:—'Dolarny's Primrose,' 'News from Scotland, declaring the damnable life of Dr. Fian, a notable Sorcerer;'" 'The three first Books of Ovid de Tristibus,' translated into English metre by Thomas Churchyard; 'Caltha Poetarum, or the Bumble Bee,' composed by Thomas Cutwode, Esq. And," adds the reviewer, "among the treasures with which the club are promised to be gratified are some scarcely less valuable productions, such as 'Cocke Lorell's Bote,' 'The Glutton's Feaver,' and 'Mery Gestes of the Wydow Edith.'" Haslewood's "indiscretions," as Dibdin calls the 'Roxburghe Revels,' show that the habit of reprinting trash clung to the club so long as Dibdin remained its guiding spirit. "The Complaynte of a Lover's Life," "Controversy between a Lover and a Jay," "The Chorle and the Bird," "Diaphantus, or the

Passions of Love," and "The Solemnities and Triumphs done and made at the Spousells and Marriage of the King's Darter," sufficiently mark the character of the club. It was not until Dibdin ceased to be its principal member, and Haslewood its editor, that a better state of things came about. Remonstrance, mockery, and severe criticism, however, at last did their work, and, in 1827, the Roxburghe Club, much to their credit, emancipated themselves from the absurd tyranny under which they had until that time existed. To Haslewood's immense disgust he was deposed from the post of editor, for which he had not one solitary qualification; and Sir Frederick Madden having been taken into council, the metrical romance of "Havelok the Dane" was published under his care. Eighty copies instead of thirty-one were issued, and the club began from this time to take a more worthy place in the republic of letters. It is amusing to note Haslewood's wrath over the change and his complaint that "a MS. not discovered by a member of the club was selected, and an extract obtained, not furnished by the industry or under the inspection of any one member, nor edited by a member; but in fact after much *pro* and *con*, it was made a complete hireling concern, truly at the expense of the club from the copying to the publishing."

With the later history of the Roxburghe Club Dibdin had little to do. Bibliomania, as he understood it, was, in fact, going out of fashion, and men of letters reasserted their supremacy. As has already been observed, Dibdin was a mere antiquarian. For the contents of the books under his consideration he cared nothing. He is great in title-pages and in bindings; he knows all the mysterious details concerning "Tall copies" and editions printed on vellum, but it

is difficult to conceive of him as smitten by a lofty thought, or interested by a happy phrase. The erudite Brunet, with whom he has been sometimes compared, has a finely ironical remark in one of his notes which, taken literally, is curiously applicable to Dibdin. In speaking of the Elzevir Cæsar, in the Bibliothèque Impériale, at Paris, Brunet mentions that it is the tallest copy in existence, being four inches and ten-twelfths in height, whilst other copies do not exceed four inches and eight, or at most nine-twelfths. He adds, “Ces détails paraîtront sans doute puérils à bien des gens : mais puisque c'est la grandeur des marges de ces sortes de livres qu'en determine la valeur, il faut bien fixer le *maximum* de cette grandeur, afin que les amateurs puissent apprécier les exemplaires qui approchent plus ou moins de la mesure donnée.” Dibdin's books are full of these *détails puerils*, and of little else, and this it is which makes them such heavy reading. Two books yet remain to prove the truth of this verdict. One is a translation of Sir Thomas More's “Utopia,” which was published under his editorial care in 1809. The translation selected was the all but unknown one of “Ralph Robinson,” of which the *Edinburgh Review* declared that it was “republished, not because it was the best, but because it was the oldest and rarest, Mr. Dibdin having adopted for his motto, in common with most other collectors, the converse of the familiar apophthegm, ‘omnia præclara esse rara.’ It is full of obsolete words, uncouth phrases, and bad grammar.” The other evidence is afforded by the large and costly volume which Dibdin published under the queer title of “The Library Companion, or the Young Man's Guide and the Old Man's Comfort in the Choice of a Library.” This is not professedly designed as a manual

of rare and curious books, but as a handbook for those who wish to form a library of general literature. Yet if the reader turns to the index in search of the giants of literature, he finds them conspicuously absent, while their places are supplied by the pygmies. An idea of the whole book may be formed from the fact that one of the most prominent positions in it is assigned to the valuable editorial labours of Mr. Joseph Haslewood.

In 1821, Dibdin published in two immense volumes a "Bibliographical Tour in France and Germany," chiefly remarkable for the extraordinarily sumptuous fashion in which it was got up. The letterpress is dull where it is not flippant, and the events recorded are often apocryphal. One circumstance, and one only, of interest attaches to the volumes. They were dedicated to the noblemen and gentlemen of the Roxburghe Club, but the high price apparently deterred many of them from subscribing, and accordingly, Dibdin's "Letters and Reminiscences" contain an immense amount of grumbling over their shabbiness. Seventeen years later he produced a "Tour in the Northern Counties of England and in Scotland," similarly got up, and almost as dull. Instead, however, of attempting a critical notice of it, I may quote in this place from Lord Cockburn's amusing journal. "Dr. Dibdin, the bibliomaniac," he says, "was here for a few days last year, and saw very little, on the strength of which little he has published a 'Northern Tour,' a mass of nonsense, for which, however, he has had the sense to make his foolish subscribers pay several guineas each.<sup>3</sup> He did not see, or try to see, the

\* The price was 8*l.* 18*s.* 6*d.* for large paper, and 4*l.* 14*s.* 6*d.* for small paper copies.

libraries at New Hailes, or Barskimming, or Aberdeen, or Arniston, or Minto, or at many other places, where they are far better than many Scotch ones he praises. His time was wasted in courting and receiving low flattery. His account of the Edinburgh bookworms is ludicrous, and affords a fair test of his other expensive and splendid tours. He says that Macvey Napier's tablecloth was so beautiful that it might justly be the boast of the 'British Linen Company !' My name stands 'high in the annals of humanity' for my generosity to the family of Burns!—to no part of which family had I ever an opportunity of doing any, even the very slightest, good; not even by a kind word. And my brother-in-law, Thomas Maitland, is the author, it seems, of a work upon Pawnbroking! But every paragraph is equally asinine. He says that it is difficult to find any horse in Edinburgh except a grey one." Unlike its predecessor, this tour was not dedicated to the Roxburghe Club, but to Miss Currer, of Eshton Hall, in Yorkshire—the lady from whom Charlotte Brontë borrowed one-half of her pseudonym. There was a good reason for the change. The Roxburghe Club was dead when it was published—dead, one is forced to believe, from heavy dinners, Mr. Haslewood's editing, and Dr. Dibdin's demands on the purses of the members. The last meeting was held in 1833, the club having achieved during its much-belauded existence the honour of issuing two creditable publications—Havelok the Dane, and William and the Wehr-wolf—which, however, owe their value to the editorial care of Sir Frederick Madden, who himself was never a member.

The latter part of Dibdin's life was melancholy in the extreme. His means were considerably hampered

in consequence of an unfortunate quarrel with a Mr. Sleigh, who, in the course of the year 1828, started a private hospital in his Marylebone parish. This Mr. Sleigh had been introduced to Dibdin by Sir Charles Scudamore, but circumstances which speedily came to light induced Sir Charles to withdraw his recommendation. The hospital was discontinued, and the clergy of Marylebone, with Dr. Dibdin at their head, published a repudiation of all connexion with it. An action for libel was thereupon brought by Mr. Sleigh, and, though it failed, Dibdin was saddled with the costs, amounting to some 1200*l.* From that time his life is one long record of more or less dignified efforts to maintain his position, and had it not been for the constant aid and comfort of his faithful friend, Dr. Bliss—the Public Registrar of Oxford—he would unquestionably have come to even worse grief than befell him. At one time we find him proposing to give six lectures on the Reformation at Oxford. The letter placed in the volume of “Tracts, &c., by Dr. Dibdin,” in the British Museum, begins, “My dear Bliss, think twice before you reply ;” and has a note in Dr. Bliss’s handwriting—“Wrote by return to advise that the scheme should be abandoned, but he came, printed circulars and failed.” Then comes a proposal for a journey to Italy, to be undertaken at the expense of twelve patrons, who were to subscribe fifty pounds each, receiving in return one-half the sum advanced and a large paper copy of the book which Dibdin proposed to write. Four patrons only were secured—the Duke of Sutherland, the Earl of Powis, Mr. Hudson Gurney, and Dr. Routh, the venerable President of Magdalen. The last was always one of the kindest and warmest of Dibdin’s patrons ; and several of his letters, breathing nothing but

generosity and goodwill, are to be found in the volume to which reference has already been made.

Other schemes were tried, but all seem to have failed. There is a proposed handbook to Berkshire, which seems to have got as far as the first sheet; then a scheme for a Dover guide-book, on the old grand scale, but all to no purpose. At last Dibdin's debts brought about his arrest, and he was compelled to plead his privilege as one of her Majesty's chaplains. After this the correspondence becomes increasingly painful. The burden is always the same—ill-health and the want of money. At one time—about the period of the Hampden controversy—"poverty alone keeps him from Oxford." At another, a malicious servant puts arsenic into his soup, and all but kills him. Four months later he begs Dr. Bliss to accept his "heartiest demonstrations of regard and thankfulness for his late bountiful attention" (adonation of 10*l.*). "It was," adds Dibdin, "too acceptable." Even Dr. Bliss tires after a while of these constant appeals for help, and a letter dated at the end of 1845 refers to an intimation from him that Dibdin "only knew how to spend and get rid of money." All through 1846 and 1847 the burden is the same. Dibdin is gradually sinking into the grave from disease of the brain, and his family have no other resource than the contributions of his friends. On the 31st of December, 1845, he writes an all but illegible scrawl to "my dear Bliss," thanking him "with all his soul" for another 10*l.* note; and in March he writes his last letter to acknowledge "with thankfulness and gratefulness of heart" a similar donation. On the 18th of November he died, leaving his family in cruel distress. Lord John Russell positively refused to place his daughter's name on the Pension List, and

the Spencer family declined to use their influence. As to the Roxburghe Club, "it is evident," writes his daughter in 1848, "that they will do nothing." "Had it not been," adds Miss Dibdin, "for one friend, I should positively have been without a shilling."

It is not quite easy to understand why this deplorable poverty should have clouded Dibdin's latter days. For several years he enjoyed an exceptionally good income. His living of Exning, in Suffolk, was of the gross value of 450*l.* a year, with a house. He, however, was non-resident, so that probably a hundred a year less than that sum would represent its value to him. St. Mary's, Bryanston Square, is of variable value, but averages from 700*l.* to 1000*l.* a year, according to Crockford. Both these livings were held by Dibdin for many years, and he was, besides, for a considerable time, librarian to Earl Spencer, from whom he undoubtedly received an ample salary. His books were not intrinsically of any great value from the reader's point of view, but they sold well—chiefly by subscription; and as their price was exceedingly high, they must have formed no unimportant source of revenue. Nor was his own expenditure upon rare and choice books by any means extravagant. He bought at great prices for the gratification of his noble patrons, but his own acquisitions were of the most trumpery kind. If he bought, it was to sell again; and the "lytell boke," as he affectedly calls the catalogue of his library, contains nothing which implies the expenditure of any great amount of money. What explanation can be given of the poverty of his later days it is impossible to say. The fact of its existence is, however, too certain; and it is to be feared that posterity will hardly take sufficient interest in Dibdin to trouble

itself much to find excuses for it. It is a mere matter of fact that his reputation is dead, and that in spite of the place which some of his books occupy in public libraries, and in spite furthermore of the occasional references made to them by writers interested in questions of bibliography, it is not likely to be revived. Divested of their gorgeous exterior, his writings are of the most insignificant value; and in these days, if an author wishes to hand down an honoured name to posterity, he must be content to do so in another way than by making his books typographical marvels or adorning them with extravagantly costly engravings.

## JOSEPH PRIESTLEY.

AMONGST the men of the eighteenth century who took part in the great political struggle which arose in this country contemporaneously with, and partly as a consequence of, the French Revolution, there is none about whom more contradictory opinions have been formed than the Unitarian preacher whose name heads this page. On the one hand he is exalted as something almost more than human ; on the other he is placed on a level with the most infamous of those who were responsible for the Reign of Terror. The admirers of the Lichfield clique, and Dissenters of every type have for at least two generations exhausted themselves in admiration of the mild genius and saintly character of the philosophical recluse of Birmingham, whose library, manuscripts, and philosophical instruments were so wickedly burned by the Tory mob. According to these ardent souls, Joseph Priestley was the meekest of men, a very saint of God, of astonishing scientific attainments, and of a character so ethereally pure that he might have stood as the model for Rufus Lyon, in the immortal story of Felix Holt. His political opinions were, in their eyes, merely speculative ; and to have opposed him in any way is merely a proof of the intolerance and innate cruelty of the Tory mind. His assailants were the poets of the " Anti-Jacobin," and it is worthy of note that the accomplished editor of the last edition of the poetry of that journal is so impressed

by the persistency with which the exalted view of Priestley's character is put forward, that he speaks somewhat apologetically of the lively satire with which he is there visited. On the principle of a man being known by the company he keeps, it is, however, easy to understand why Priestley should have been very vigorously attacked. The associate of Thelwall, Horne Tooke, Gilbert Wakefield, and the rest of that clique of admirers of the French Revolution and its principles, was likely to meet with somewhat strenuous opposition in the stormy quarter of a century which ended with 1815. Something more may be added. That Priestley was himself a man of peace is probable enough. His theories were, however, anything but peaceful, and he seems to have been always ready to applaud the most violent and outrageous acts of the revolutionary party on condition only that they were perpetrated in the name of liberty.

It appears to be thought by his admirers that any little errors into which he may have fallen in matters of politics ought to be considered as atoned for by his great and valuable scientific discoveries, or by his laborious theological speculations; and it may be worth while briefly to investigate these claims. At the outset, it may be admitted that Priestley was a most voluminous author. "Dr. Priestley," says the *Edinburgh Review*, "has written more and on a greater variety of subjects than any other English author." Mr. James Martineau, who, as a Unitarian, naturally entertains a great reverence for so distinguished a member of the sect which he adorns, is greatly impressed with Priestley's versatility of mind. "To refer to a catalogue of Dr. Priestley's works is," he says, "like consulting the prospectus of an encyclo-

pædia ; and it is impossible to remember that they are all the productions of one individual, without the impression that his mind was more adventurous than profound, and his vision more telescopic than microscopic." Brougham is less complimentary, and does not trouble himself to veil his adverse opinion in any such flattering phrase. "He is one of the most voluminous writers of any age or country, and probably he is, of all voluminous writers, the one who has the fewest readers." It would have been strange, indeed, had the case been otherwise. Priestley's separate publications number altogether one hundred and forty-one, occupying many pages of the catalogue of the British Museum Library, ranging from slender pamphlets to solid quartos, and filling in the collected edition no fewer than forty-five large and closely-printed volumes. Five or six of these are occupied by scientific dissertations, the remainder being devoted to discussions of all conceivable topics. Thus we find him writing on the Theory of Language; on Oratory and Criticism; on the History, General Policy, Laws, and Constitution of England, and on Education. Presently he publishes a Chart of History; then a Chart of Biography. His scientific labours are diversified with theological controversies, and with the tracts and pamphlets which accompanied those controversies as a matter of course. One day he answers the philosophical scepticism of Gibbon. Then in rapid succession fall from the press Disquisitions on Matter and Spirit; two Histories of the Christian Church; a Comparison of Heathen and Christian Philosophy; and an Essay on the Doctrine of Necessity, to which he became a convert at a very early age. Politics come in for a large share of his attention, and he writes voluminously in support of the Catholic

Claims and in defence of the French Revolution and of the revolted colonists of North America. His controversial works are the most considerable of his writings in point of bulk, filling, as they do, no fewer than twenty thick volumes. It is hardly necessary to say that all this controversy is as dead as its author; but it is curious to turn over some of these volumes and to note the leading characteristics of Priestley's manner. Conscious, apparently, of his individual weakness, he contrived, as a rule, to shelter himself behind the name of a great opponent. Amongst those whom he thus entangled were personages no less important than Bishop Horsley, Hume, and Gibbon. The result of these astute tactics was that a great number of people, who would have been unlikely in the extreme to trouble themselves with the independent writings of an obscure Unitarian preacher in a provincial town, were interested in a controversy, one of the parties to which was a man of European reputation.

As a controversialist, Priestley was not distinguished. Speaking of his studies in natural philosophy, Brougham remarks that he was an admirable observer in matters of experiment, but a superficial and inaccurate reasoner; and very much the same opinion may be formed of his controversial quality in matters of theology. He makes his point in a definite and positive fashion, but his argument has always the appearance of an afterthought —or, as it would, perhaps, be more just to put the matter, he arrives at his conclusion first, and then taxes his ingenuity to find reasons to support it. Whether those reasons were bad or good, they were uniformly put forward in an essentially provincial fashion. It was the misfortune of Priestley, as it was of Darwin, that he was the idol of a small country

town, and the oracle of a coterie of conspicuously inferior men and women, in whose eyes his very weaknesses were virtues, and follies signs of strength. The constant contact with men of wider culture and greater influence, which residence in the capital implies, would have been of infinite benefit to both ; and in Priestley's case it might possibly have moderated, if it failed altogether to extinguish, the egregious vanity which mars every page of his controversial writing. He is nothing if not sceptical ; yet, at the same time, he is dogmatic to excess ; and, as Mr. Martineau aptly remarks, "most dogmatic when most in doubt." His whole system of theology is a system of paradoxes. He utterly denies and ridicules the doctrine of the Trinity ; yet he calls himself a Christian. He decides dogmatically that the founder of Christianity was no more than a man, and that there is no such thing as inspiration in the ordinarily accepted sense of the term. He doubts whether man has a soul ; and he is a necessitarian to the point of disbelieving altogether in human responsibility. And yet, with all these beliefs and no beliefs, he is from the beginning of his career to its end the most parsonic of Dissenting preachers, and is never so happy as when preaching his dogmatic scepticism, praying to the God in whom he but half believes, and catechizing the young upon indeterminate questions and concerning dogmas in which his convictions are but half formed. A modest man so placed would, one would think, have avoided controversy, or, if he conceived it his duty to enter upon it, would have done so with diffidence and the most scrupulous courtesy towards his opponents. Not so was it with Priestley. His tone is invariably arrogant and offensive—rather that of an angry schoolmaster addressing

an obstinate pupil, than of one philosopher controverting the carefully formed and courteously expressed opinions of another. None of his opponents can, in his opinion, produce anything worth the trouble of replying to ; and when it is remembered who those opponents were, there is something exquisitely ludicrous in the notion of Priestley's airs of superiority to them. His pretensions were, however, admitted for the time, the excellent Bishop Horsley setting an admirable example of Christian courtesy and generosity. Unfortunately, the example was not followed, though no great surprise need be felt on that account. A man who was vain enough to believe that he could, in addition to a host of other occupations, translate afresh the whole of the Hebrew Scriptures in three or four years, was hardly likely to accept a tacit rebuke with modesty or to profit by an example of charity and courtesy.

This last idea which Priestley entertained, and was for a time anxious to put into practice, affords a somewhat striking illustration of the general superficiality of his character and an explanation of the small value of most of his work. It is perfectly true that he stumbled upon some important discoveries ; but his accounts of the experiments by which he arrived at them sufficiently prove that they were made upon an empirical and not upon a scientific method. Black, who was a really scientific chemist and investigator, had laid the foundation of pneumatic chemistry long before ; and Cavendish, working upon the foundation laid down by Black, had sketched the outlines of the superstructure by his publication in 1766. Ten years later, Priestley began a series of desultory experiments in a brewhouse at Leeds for the production of Pyr-

mont water, the account of which, as given by himself in the "Philosophical Transactions," is curiously unscientific. Incidentally, no doubt, those experiments produced important consequences—the manufacture of aërated water, for example, was one result of them—but the germ of everything that Priestley discovered by their means may be found in the writings of Black and Cavendish, and had he followed their method he might have made infinitely greater and more rapid progress. Unfortunately, he seems to have preferred to work in the dark. "When I began my experiments," he says, "I knew very little of chemistry, and had, in a manner, no idea of the subject before I attended a course of lectures at an academy where I taught." Again: one of his earlier publications is a "History of Electricity," and, concerning it, he confesses in his autobiography that when he began to write he was "but imperfectly acquainted with the subject." In other words, he began to teach before he had learned, like the private tutor in the story who began to learn German a week before his pupil, and so contrived to keep himself always a couple or three lessons ahead. The story does not say that the tutor was very successful after a course of such teaching; nor, according to Brougham, was Priestley. Speaking of the book in question, "it is," he says, "a careless and superficial work, hastily written, as is his 'History of Vision,' and the original experiments afford no new information of any value." Chemistry, electricity, and optics not being sufficient to occupy all the time of this indefatigable teacher, he ventured, when a tutor in the much-talked-of "Dissenting Academy" at Warrington, to give a course of lectures on Anatomy, without, as it would appear, so much as having performed or

even seen a single demonstration. From all these labours he sought relaxation in music, and diverted his leisure by playing the flute. It is curiously characteristic of the man that he recommends students to follow his example in this particular—especially those who have no fine ear, on the ground that they will not be annoyed by their own bad music.

It is only fair to add that Priestley's erratic and unscientific experiments led to greater results than might have been expected. There can be little doubt, for example, that he was the real discoverer of oxygen. Lavoisier claims the credit of the discovery, and Scheele disputes it with him ; but a comparison of dates proves that Priestley communicated his achievement to the great French chemist at least twelve months before the latter gave it to the world. It is quite true that the theory which led to his discovery was utterly erroneous, but the fact of the discovery itself remains unaltered. He found that minium, or red lead, when exposed to the sun's rays, concentrated by a burning-glass, gave off a pure aërisome body, which had the power of strongly increasing the intensity of flame. This gas he called " dephlogisticated air," upon the principle, says Brougham, " that the matter of heat and light, the phlogiston of Stahl, being abstracted from it by the return of the calx to its metallic state, which phlogiston was supposed by that theory to effect, the air had great avidity for phlogiston, and seized it from the inflammable bodies it came in contact with." Reasoning of this kind irresistibly reminds one of the ancient axiom about the abhorrence of nature for a vacuum ; but, as with Torricelli, so with Priestley—the erroneous theory led to an important practical discovery. Nor did the discovery stop at this point. It is to Priestly

that modern science is indebted for the discovery that the absorption of oxygen by the lungs in the process of respiration gives the red colour to arterial blood. Here again, however, we have one of the blunders of early chemistry. The gas was called "oxygen" by Priestley, from the belief that it embodied the acidifying (or oxydising) principle of the atmosphere; and the name is retained—presumably for the sake of convenience—though the theory which it embodied was proved erroneous long ago. Nor was the discovery of oxygen the sole result of Priestley's experiments. To quote once more from Brougham: "He discovered the gases of muriatic, of sulphuric, and of fluoric acids, ammoniacal gas, and nitrous oxide gas. He also discovered the combination which nitrous oxide gas forms suddenly with oxygen, diminishing the volume of both in proportion to that combination; and he thus invented the method of endiometry, or the ascertainment of the relative purity of different kinds of atmospheric air." But whilst all these discoveries are unquestionably his, the fact remains that they were rather the results of accident than the scientific deductions from ascertained facts. The only theory which he ever attempted to elucidate by his experiments was the phlogistic theory—long exploded, and yet held to by him with singular pertinacity to the last day of his life. After all, however, we must admit that humanity has gained more from what James Watt was wont to call Priestley's "random hap-hazarding" than from the more distinctly scientific labours of some of his predecessors, and of those who came after him.

The defects of Priestley's scientific character, and possibly also of his controversial methods, may fairly be traced to the extremely desultory nature of his

education, and to his association with a body of people who, however morally estimable they may have been, were at no time distinguished for their culture or their erudition. He was the son of a cloth-dresser, and grandson of one Joseph Priestley, of Birstal Fieldhead, near Leeds, who is described as "a man as much famed for his heavenly conduct, as his grandson has since been for his natural abilities." He was born in 1733, and as his mother died in 1739, he knew but little of her, save that she was diligent in teaching him the Assembly's Catechism. Of his father he seems to have known no more, his grandfather, and afterwards an aunt, having taken charge of him from his infancy. His education was desultory, but he early acquired a certain knowledge of the classics and a little Hebrew from a Dissenting minister of Heckmondwike, and from a very early age he became involved in religious controversy. In his curious autobiography, he says of the aunt to whom he owed his education, that "being left in good circumstances, her home was the resort of all the Dissenting ministers of the neighbourhood, without distinction; and those who were the most obnoxious on account of their heresy were almost as welcome to her, if she thought them honest and good men (which she was not unwilling to do) as any others." Brought up amidst such influences as these, it is hardly surprising to find that Priestley's theological opinions before he went to the Daventry "Academy" were somewhat mixed, or that in no long period he had absorbed nearly, if not quite all the heresies of the day, or that *he* should admit that "upon studying the subject regularly in the course of his academical education" *he* should have become "a confirmed Necessarian,"

His account of his relations with this Academy at Daventry is not without interest, as affording an evidence of the real amount of liberty enjoyed by those who clamour most loudly for freedom in religious matters. It was proposed by his aunt and his relatives generally, all of whom were strict Calvinists, to send him to the Academy at Mile End, then under the charge of Dr. Conder. As, however, he was an Arminian, he resolutely opposed this determination, "especially upon finding that if he went thither, besides giving an 'Experience,'—in other words making a general confession for the edification not of one priest, but of many presbyters,—he must subscribe his assent to ten printed articles of the strictest Calvinistic faith, and repeat the subscription every six months." A declaration of assent to the Thirty-nine Articles, which it has pleased a certain party to represent as an intolerable burden, has at no time been required more than twice in a man's academic career, though it was understood that in order to enjoy the endowments of the Church of England, the student ought to be one of her members; but the notion of requiring a fresh subscription every six months is worthy only of the narrow sect with which it originated. When, moreover, the real character of these Calvinistic articles is considered, Priestley's objection to signing them is easily intelligible. One of them—given in a note by the laborious Mr. Rutt, who published Priestley's works after his death—relates to the resurrection of the body, which it describes as "a reparation of the same numerical body by a reunion of all its scattered parts . . . that Divine Justice may prey upon the sinner for ever, satisfying itself by a perpetual miracle, rendering the creature immortal in the midst of the

flames, always consuming but never consumed." How any human being could bring himself to believe in such atrocious and abominable blasphemies against his Maker it is difficult to imagine, and whether as a matter of fact any one ever did accept them in their literal and absolute meaning may very reasonably be questioned. Certain it is that Priestley refused his assent, and the end of the matter so far as he was concerned was that the scheme for sending him to Mile End was given up, and that he was sent instead to the Dissenting Academy at Daventry, of which the excellent Dr. Doddridge had formerly been principal.

Even here, however, the time of the students seems to have been mainly spent in idle controversy. Priestley tells us that the tutor and the sub-tutor—Dr. Ashwood and the Rev. Samuel Clark—were opposed in theological views, the former being strictly orthodox, and the latter "taking the side of heresy, though always with the greatest modesty." Much time was consequently spent in the discussion of such questions as liberty and necessity, the sleep of the soul, and matters of orthodoxy and heresy, the end of all which was that at the mature age of twenty-two, Priestley became imbued with the notions of Collins and Hartley. Discussions of this kind may possibly be both useful and valuable. There is a certain grandeur in the idea of a man of great genius sitting down to debate with a friend of equal power on "fate, free-will, fore-knowledge absolute," but the effect of such debates on young and half-educated men cannot but be objectionable. Priestley himself admits as much. "I saw reason," he says, "to embrace what is generally called the heterodox side of almost every question," the result being that when he left the "Academy" he was

an Arian, a Necessarian and perhaps something more. Better mental discipline might have produced better effect, but the course of study at Daventry seems to have been singularly imperfect. The object with which the Academy had been founded was the training of Dissenting preachers, but "there was then," Priestley tells us, "no provision made for teaching the learned languages. We had even no compositions or orations in Latin. Our course of lectures was also defective in containing no lectures on the Scriptures or on Ecclesiastical History, and by the students in general . . commentators in general and ecclesiastical history also were held in contempt." That Priestley should have picked up a respectable amount of scholarship in so uncongenial an atmosphere, says more for his abilities than for the wisdom of his teachers, and their system.

On leaving Daventry, he became what is called in dissenting societies "co-pastor" to a certain Mr. Meadows, of Needham Market, who was superannuated. There he was engaged at the magnificent stipend of 30*l.* per annum, but as it was soon discovered that he was an Arian, his salary was seldom paid, and had it not been for charity he could not have lived. He made various efforts to escape, and at last was invited to preach at Sheffield, where, however, he was not approved, less perhaps because—as he wishes it to be understood—of his Arian opinions than of an unpleasant impediment to his speech, which appears to have clung to him throughout the greater part of his life. A congregation at Nantwich was less particular, and thither he removed in 1758, after a stay at Needham of about three years. At Nantwich he had a school of about thirty boys, with a separate room for

half a dozen young ladies, in which he taught daily from seven in the morning until four in the afternoon, with an interval of only one hour. After this he went daily to the house of a Mr. Tomlinson, an “eminent attorney” of Nantwich, in whose family he taught for three hours more. When the short-lived dissenting academy of Warrington—famous afterwards from the connexion of Dr. Aikin, and his daughter, Mrs. Barbauld, with it—was first projected, Priestley was proposed as “tutor in the languages.” Aikin was preferred to him, but when the latter was advanced to be tutor in divinity, the post was offered to Priestley, who at once gave up his Nantwich school and removed to Warrington, where he stayed for six years.

His occupations here gave him sufficient leisure for pursuing his scientific studies and observations, and as he was always able to spend a month of every year in London, he made many friends in the scientific world—Franklin, Dr. Price, Dr. Watson the physician, and Mr. Canton among the rest. From Warrington, he went to Leeds, where also he stayed for six years, ministering to “a very friendly, liberal and harmonious congregation,” and prosecuting those scientific studies for which he had so great an inclination. At the end of this time he was, he explains, tempted to leave Leeds, “to go into the family of the Earl of Shelburne, now the Marquis of Lansdowne, he stipulating to give me two hundred and fifty pounds per annum, a house to live in, and a certainty for life, or in case of his death, or of my separation from him.” The arrangement was a most generous one, honourable to both parties, and it lasted for seven years, during which time Priestley was treated more as a friend than

as a servant. His office was nominally that of librarian, but he had little employment as such beyond arranging Lord Shelburne's books and indexing his private papers. His summers were spent with his family at Calne, near to which place Bowood is situated, and his winters principally at his lordship's house in London. In 1774, his patron took him on what he is pleased to describe as "a little excursion" through Flanders, Holland, and Germany, as far as Strasburg, and thence to Paris, where he spent a month in scientific society. During this period his theological opinions underwent considerable modification—not altogether it would seem to Lord Shelburne's satisfaction. It is impossible to be altogether surprised at this fact. Priestley had left Leeds an Arian; he had professed in Paris to be a firm believer in the doctrines of Christianity, and then returning to England, he plunged at once into theological controversy coming out a Materialist, a Necessitarian, and a disbeliever in the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. Gradually an estrangement grew up between Lord Shelburne and his scientific companion. About two years before the separation, Priestley asked if his patron had any fault to find with his conduct. He replied that he had not, but some time afterwards he intimated to Dr. Price his desire to give to Priestley an establishment in Ireland. Priestley took the hint and retired on a pension of 150*l.* a year; 50*l.* more than he had received as minister of the Unitarian congregation in Leeds. The separation was a final one. Lord Shelburne expressed a wish that it should be amicable, and so it was; but when Priestley visited London, in hope of being received on his former friendly footing, his visits were declined.

Dr. Priestley's relations with Lord Shelburne illus-

trate one side of his character which his admirers carefully ignore—his singular readiness, that is to say, to accept benefits for which he could make no adequate return. His services to Lord Shelburne himself would, by his own account, have been amply repaid by the gratuitous maintenance which was always at his disposal; his scientific discoveries were facilitated in no ordinary way by the generosity of the makers of philosophical instruments, and his personal expenses were largely met by the friendly contributions of his admirers. Thus, when he left Lord Shelburne's service, he found himself in some difficulties in consequence of the expense of his removal. Under such circumstances, he had no scruple in accepting from a Mrs. Rayner, a member of Mr. Lindsey's congregation, a hundred guineas, "besides smaller sums with which she occasionally assisted him." Soon afterwards she gave up to him "four hundred guineas, and to this day," he adds, writing fifteen years afterwards, "she has never failed giving me every year marks of her friendship." After Mrs. Rayner's generous gift, it appears that Dr. Fothergill proposed "an enlargement of his allowance for making experiments, and considering," adds Priestley, "the generosity with which this voluntary offer was made by persons who could well afford it, and who thought me qualified to serve the interests of science, I thought it right to accept of it, and I preferred it to any pension from the Court, offers of which were more than once made by persons who thought they could have procured it for me." This modest patriot, who proudly disdained a pension from the State, was thus willing to accept an annual gratification from his friends. In his *Autobiography* he gives a list of thirteen eminent persons,

amongst whom were Mr. Wedgewood, Mr. Strutt (of Derby), and Mr. Radcliffe, who subscribed towards his maintenance ; and he adds to these names those of Dr. Heberden, and Mr. Tayleur (of Shrewsbury), “ who at different times remitted him considerable sums.” Mr. Parker, of Fleet Street, generously supplied him with every instrument he wanted in glass. Wedgewood provided all the retorts, tubes, &c., in pottery ; and Mr. William Russell, of Birmingham, not merely presented him with large sums of money, but incited his congregation to raise a subscription of 200*l.* towards the expense of publishing his theological works.

On leaving Calne, Priestley settled in Birmingham, where he speedily was invited to take charge of a Dissenting congregation, and where for seven years he lived the usual life of a Dissenting minister, preaching on Sundays, and devoting himself to his favourite pursuits throughout the week. Gradually he became attracted more and more into the field of politics, the question of the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts in 1789 naturally exciting considerable interest, and giving him an opportunity of preaching political sermons, of which he availed himself somewhat extensively. When the first murmurings of the French Revolution began to make themselves heard, he threw himself warmly into the struggle on behalf of the insurrectionary party. His opinions of this period may be studied by those who care to undertake the labour in the voluminous collection of his letters, published after his death by his admirer Mr. John Towill Rutt. A line or two, quoted almost at random, will, however, sufficiently serve to indicate the temper and spirit in which Priestley regarded the state of affairs at this time. Thus, when the Whigs met in July, 1790, at

the “Crown and Anchor,” to rejoice over the French Revolution, Priestley writes to Price that the dinner “was most happily conceived, and the success of it gives me the greatest pleasure.” He adds, “I do not wonder at the hatred and dread of this spirit of revolution in kings and courtiers. Their power is generally usurpation, and I hope the time is approaching when an end will be put to all usurpation in things civil or religious, first in Europe, and then in other countries.” It can only be said that if he made frequent use of expressions of this kind in public, he had no right to complain of accusations of disloyalty. Again, of Burke’s “*Vindication*,” he says that “for sophistry and impudence he never saw anything equal to it.” Tom Paine’s “*Rights of Man*” is in danger, and Priestley inquires of Mr. Lindsey with great solicitude what is being done about it. “Is the edition cancelled, or will it be sold in France and America, and a new one printed for England?” Three days later he writes again, to say that he is “glad Mr. Paine’s book is to be published as it was printed. . . It will be read the more on account of the stoppage.” And, lastly, the atrocities perpetrated on the person of Louis XVIII. call from Priestley only the remark, “Our anxiety during the King of France’s escape and joy on his capture cannot be described,” whilst the murders of that unfortunate sovereign and his consort afford him the liveliest satisfaction.

Priestley, to do him justice, at no time disguised his opinions, and the result might have been foreseen without much difficulty. He had been engaged for years in a paper war with the clergy of Birmingham, and party feeling had risen to a very high point, not merely on political but on social and local questions.

Whilst things were in this condition, an announcement was made of a dinner in an hotel at Birmingham to "commemorate the French Revolution." On the second appearance of the advertisement another announcement was put forth, promising an authentic list of all those who should dine at the hotel, and this was followed by a most inflammatory handbill. The admirers of Priestley uniformly declare that this handbill was the work of a cunning Tory. Mr. J. A. Langford, in his excellent "*Century of Birmingham Life,*" very reasonably points out, however, that "it is quite as probable that it was the work of a foolish and over-zealous Liberal." In this handbill, after an enthusiastic reference to the glories of the French struggle for liberty, the following sentences occur:—"But is it possible to forget that our own Parliament is venal? your Minister hypocritical? your clergy legal oppressors? the Reigning Family extravagant? the crown of a certain great personage becoming every day too weighty for the head that wears it? too weighty for the people who gave it? your taxes partial and excessive? your representation a cruel insult upon the sacred rights of property, religion, and freedom?" This precious manifesto wound up with an ominous exhortation to the populace to prove that "The Peace of Slavery is worse than the War of Freedom," and with a warning, "Of that moment let Tyrants beware."

Naturally enough, this incendiary placard created no inconsiderable sensation. The magistrates offered a reward of a hundred guineas to be paid on the conviction of the writer, printer, or distributor of it; and a rejoinder was issued in the afternoon of the day on which it appeared, calling upon the townsfolk of Birmingham to resist its attempt to excite tumult and

disorder. “Whatever the modern republicans may imagine, or the regicidal propounders of the rights of man design, let us convince them that there is enough of loyalty in the majority of the inhabitants of this country to support and defend their king, and that we are not so destitute of common sense as not to prefer the order, liberty, happiness, and wealth which is diffused through every portion of the British empire, to the anarchy, the licentiousness, the poverty, and the misery which now overwhelm the degraded kingdom of France.” This was followed by a handbill from the promoters of the dinner, disavowing in the strongest possible terms the first of these placards, and protesting their “firm attachment to the constitution of their country as vested in the three estates of King, Lords, and Commons.”

The dinner was held in due course, the toasts were proposed, and the company separated. Throughout the afternoon, and during the time of the dinner, a considerable crowd gathered around the hotel, hissing and hustling the guests as they assembled, and groaning whilst the dinner was going on. After the company had separated, the mob grew more violent, and demolished every window of the hotel with stones. The magistrates attempted to interfere, but they were powerless ; and the mob, having worked their will upon the building, divided into two parties, one of which made its way to the New Meeting House (Priestley’s), whilst the other betook itself to the Old Meeting House, both of which buildings were wrecked and set on fire. As soon as this part of the work was accomplished, the crowd hurried towards Priestley’s home at Fair Hill, a mile and a half distant. Here they renewed their patriotic efforts to convince the learned

Doctor not merely of the error of his ways, but of the extreme unpalatableness of his opinions, with the effect of destroying the whole contents of his house and laboratory. Fortunately for himself, Priestley and his family were able to make good their escape, but his unpopularity with the Birmingham people was such that he was unable to return to them.

Mr. Langford, to whose "Century of Birmingham Life" reference has already been made, thinks it beyond question that there was much truth in Priestley's assertion that the riots were caused by the High Church party. This, however, I venture to doubt, for the simple reason that on reading the pamphlets and papers relating to these unhappy riots dispassionately through, it is evident that the balance of angry temper is on the side of Dr. Priestley. His tone towards the clergy of the town is uniformly rancorous in the extreme, and if they were occasionally guilty of a somewhat sharp retort, they said nothing worse than he had said on a score of occasions. To suppose that the clergy were guilty of actually instigating the riot is, moreover, perfectly unnecessary. The popular mind was in a most irritable and excited condition, and had been so for a long time past. Only eleven years before a popular uprising had put all London into the power of the mob for six days, on the flimsy pretext of "No Popery." Now with almost every day came news of the outrages which were being perpetrated in France in the name of liberty—stories of executions *à la lanterne*, of aristocrats' heads hacked off by the mob and carried on pikes through the streets, of the captivity of the Royal family, and of the general misery and distress which had followed in the train of the revolution; and it can hardly be wondered at if

the English people were nervously anxious to avoid the repetition of similar horrors in this country. The train, to use Priestley's own metaphor, was already laid; the spark was readily found in the incendiary placard already quoted. Dr. Priestley had posed as the foremost opponent of the clergy and of the existing order of things; he had hardly the right to complain if an exasperated mob made of him their first victim. At all events, it is not quite fair to accuse the clergy, whom he had persistently reviled for eight years, of instigating the attack upon him, without much more evidence than can now be commanded. There is, moreover, another matter to be taken into consideration. Priestley had allowed himself to be made a citizen of the French Republic, and the fact was doubtless well known in Birmingham. In the then existing state of popular feeling that fact was alone sufficient to account for the wrath of the mob.

Priestley's removal to London was by no means a misfortune to him. He protests, indeed, that the compensation which he received from the Hundred was less by 2000*l.* than his actual loss, and he laments with much pathos the destruction of his invaluable manuscripts and apparatus. It may be true that the sum awarded by the jury as compensation for this scandalous riot was too small; it was not thought so by other people. But granting that it was less than the actual value of the goods destroyed, the difference was more than made up by the generosity of his brother-in-law, who gave him first 500*l.*, and then 10,000*l.*, and settled upon him an annuity of 200*l.* a year for life. The loss of his papers has excited immense commiseration, but it may be doubted whether humanity is much the worse for their destruction. The

only papers to which his memoirs make any reference as missing are his diaries, and their place is fully supplied by his lengthy autobiography, and by the voluminous collection of his letters, published by the pious care of Mr. Rutt. His other works appear to have been sent to the press as fast as they were written.

On leaving Birmingham, Priestley succeeded his friend Dr. Price as Principal of the Hackney (Dissenting) Academy, and plunged once more into theological controversy. His scientific acquaintances appear, however, to have deserted him to some extent, even the Royal Society turning a cold shoulder towards him. His correspondence with the revolutionary party in France had possibly something to do with his unpopularity, and though he declined the singular honour of a seat in the National Convention, offered by the Department of the Orne, in September, 1792, he found himself very generally looked upon as more interested in the prosperity of France than of his own country, and consequently treated with suspicion and coldness. He accordingly retired to America in 1794, where he settled down, after receiving a series of congratulatory addresses in New York and Philadelphia. He does not seem to have made any great impression on the American people, before whom he appears to have endeavoured to assume somewhat the character of a martyr. In England, he was indeed treated as entitled to that name by his fellow republicans. Coleridge, for instance, begins a sonnet with—

Though roused by that dark Vizier riot rude  
Have driven our Priestley o'er the ocean swell ;  
Though superstition and her wolfish brood  
Bay his mild radiance.

But even in England this way of speaking of him

went out of fashion before long, while in America it never seems to have been common. As Brougham puts the matter, “His religion was too much for those who had ceased to care for sacred things, and far too scanty for those who still were Christians, while his republican opinions were exceedingly distasteful, because they were tinged with a decided admiration of France.” He stayed on upon his new property, however, doing a little in the way of clearing it, and keeping up a voluminous correspondence with some of his old friends in England, and with some of those new ones—including President Jefferson—whose acquaintance he had made in the States.

Towards the end of 1795 his son Henry died, and within less than a year his wife followed the favourite son. There is something very pathetic in the dulled sensibilities of the old controversialist on these occasions. Writing to his friend Mr. Russell, he says, “I do not at all think of him (Henry) as to this world, or as any particular loss to myself, but only as to another, where I have no doubt I shall meet him again; and as I believe he had a good mind and no vices, I hope to meet him in favourable circumstances.” On the death of his wife he writes to his constant friend the Rev. Theophilus Lindsey, paying a warm tribute to her good qualities, and adding, “We have lived together more than thirty-four years. She, as well as myself, was much affected with the death of Harry. Though it is now near nine months since he died, he has never been long out of my thoughts, but this will affect me much more; though I have abundant sources of consolation, for which I am truly thankful.” The “abundant sources of consolation” were, as might be expected, more polemical controversies, and a projected

journey through the United States for the purpose of founding lay Unitarian societies. The controversy was not neglected, but the tour was not undertaken, though in 1797 he made a journey to Philadelphia to help in the establishment of one of the societies in question. A journey to Paris for the purpose of looking after his property in the French Funds was debated with his friends for twelve months, but eventually abandoned, Priestley's energies finding vent in political and religious controversy, not always of the most courteous kind. During this period the "benevolences" of his friends in England continued, and were acknowledged by him in terms which do not always impress the reader with a high opinion of the man who could thus accept immense obligations from comparative strangers.

The end was not very distant. Throughout the letters of this period there are frequent allusions to ill-health, and in one of them, addressed to Mrs. Lindsey on the death of her husband (dated May 8, 1802), Priestley says, "If you saw me now you would not flatter me with the prospect of long surviving my excellent friend." A month later he speaks of "the great change to which we are making near approaches," and which he regarded "with more curiosity than anxiety." After this nearly every letter contains allusions to failing health, and to the impossibility of his enjoying a prolonged life; but he dragged on a painful existence for two more years, suffering from fits of ague, impaired digestion and deafness. To the last his mind was active, and besides maintaining a voluminous correspondence, he retained his fondness for political and religious pamphleteering. In January, 1804, his weakness and general illness increased, and

on the last day of the month paralysis seized upon him. Six days later he died easily, painlessly, and without theatrical display.

He was buried as he had desired to be, by the side of his wife and son, but his monument is at Birmingham. It is characteristic that the rather fulsome inscription should have been written by no less a personage than Dr. Parr, who, though a priest of the Church of England, takes occasion to extol Priestley's "sincerity as an expounder of the Scriptures," and his "example as a Christian," which will, the lapidarian informs us, "be instructive to the Wise and interesting to the Good in every Age." After all, however, Priestley's character is not one which can be wrapped up in a couple of sentences. That he was a perfectly conscientious man no one need doubt. That he attained to a certain eminence as a man of science, and that he did good service to the world by his discoveries is equally uncontested. But that he was the "Patriot, Saint, and Sage," Coleridge imagined him to be may be emphatically denied. His patriotism was of that peculiar kind which calls itself cosmopolitan. His own country was not first in his estimation, and where her interests clashed with what he philosophically considered his "principles" he was fully prepared to see those interests sacrificed. Like many members of the Opposition at the close of the eighteenth century, he had a warm sympathy with the French Revolution, which even the atrocities of the reign of terror failed to quench. When the National Convention offered him a seat, Europe had just been shocked with the September massacres. Yet Priestley in refusing the proffered honour has no word of reprobation for these atrocities. He can only "pray

that the Supreme Being, the Father and Friend of mankind . . may destroy the machinations of your enemies, and put an end to the troubles with which you are now agitated, and may He give you a speedy and happy establishment to your affairs." In another letter of the same date to Roland, "he exhorted him to continue his exertions against the internal enemies of the State" (Rutt. II. 191). When he reaches America the same temper is visible. He is all enthusiasm for the young Republic, and he has only the bitterest words of condemnation and of hatred for the country he has left. The fact that he was at Birmingham the victim of a popular tumult, and that the cause of his retirement from England was the unpopularity of himself and of his principles with the great mass of Englishmen never appears to strike him. All that he can see is that he has been ill-used on account of his opinions, and that ill-usage he chooses to impute to the machinations of the "kings and priests" of that country against which he has shaken off the dust of his feet. In America itself he speedily lost the popularity which awaited him on his arrival by reason of his desire to see the Union dependent upon France rather than strong and independent. He could not, in fact, be patriotic even to the country of his adoption.

Of his saintliness more may be said. He was unquestionably a firm believer in the primary truths of religion, though he interpreted them in a perverse fashion of his own, and seems to have changed his opinions with considerable frequency. Under such circumstances it might have been thought that he would avoid controversy. He chose, however, to rush into it on all occasions, and failing the offer of oppor-

tunities he would make them. His conduct in these controversies affords a sufficient test of his right to the character of "sage." He was not compelled to engage with Gibbon, but he did so, and finding the arguments of his great opponent too much for him, he lost his temper, called his adversary by evil names, and imputed the worst motives to him. Priestley's intolerance in this dispute was the less pardonable, since he himself was, as Gibbon remarked, heterodox enough to "condemn by circumscribing the inspiration of the Evangelists, and to condemn the religion of every Christian nation as a fable less innocent and not less absurd than Mahomet's journey to the third heaven." With Bishop Horsley, his controversy was equally bitter, the bitterness being as before wholly on Priestley's side. That venerable prelate had the manifest advantage both in learning and in argument, and if he used strong though admittedly dignified language, it must be granted that the occasion was no ordinary one. Priestley was clamouring for the overthrow of the Church of England ; he had charged his opponent with "misrepresentation, defamation, and calumny;" he had (says Horsley) "insulted him in his character as a scholar and a man;" he had even threatened in the event of the success of the Socinian party that the fate of the beneficed clergy would be "a prison with a good conscience, or their present emoluments without one," and the only reply which Horsley condescended to make was to impress upon his adversary the fact that before the consummation arrived for which Priestley looked, both would in all human probability "be gone to those unseen abodes, where the din of controversy and the din of war are equally unheard. There we shall rest together till the

last trumpet summons us to stand before our God and King. That whatever of intemperate wrath and carnal anger," adds Horsley, "hath mixed itself on either side, with the zeal with which we have pursued our fierce contention, may be forgiven to us both is a prayer which I breathe from the bottom of my soul, and to which my antagonist, if he have any part of the spirit of a Christian, upon his bended knees will say, 'Amen.'"

Putting controversy on one side, however, Priestley's character seems to have been amiable enough. He was greatly liked in the society in which he moved as well in England as in the United States, and there must have been something uncommon in the man who could find as many as fifteen personal friends to testify to their regard for him by subscribing regularly to his maintenance for many years. His failing seems to have been that he did not know how to hold his hand when the pen was in it. In social life he was courtesy and kindness embodied. An American admirer, who printed a small collection of "Recollections and Anecdotes" after his death, says, "Dr. Priestley was remarkably frank and easy of access, and in company perfectly unassuming, never attempting to take the lead in conversation, but always ready to accommodate himself to the tastes and wishes of others. He was neither taciturn nor talkative, and it may be truly said that whatever prejudices had been previously entertained against him on account of his theological opinions by those who knew him only as a polemical writer were removed on a personal acquaintance." Had he displayed the same qualities in his theological and political disputes, or more wisely still, had he altogether abstained from controversy of both kinds,

his reputation would have been higher than it is, and he would be remembered as a successful worker in the field of science, rather than, as is now the case, as the victim of a wretched riot which his own folly had been mainly instrumental in provoking.

## THE AUTHOR OF “SANDFORD AND MERTON.”

IN the biographical preface to his republication of Brooke’s “Fool of Quality”—a book which in character bears a great resemblance to “Sandford and Merton”—the late Charles Kingsley says: “One would be glad (if physiognomy be, as some hold, a key to character) of some trustworthy description or portrait of his outward man; to have known even the colour of his eyes and hair; but this is not to be had. Some Irish friend describes him in terms general enough, as when young, ‘fresh-looking, slenderly formed, and exceedingly graceful. He had an oval face, ruddy complexion, and large soft eyes full of fire.’” Then, after mentioning the various more or less authentic portraits of Brooke which are extant, Kingsley goes on to say, “the face must have been one of a very delicate and regular beauty. The large soft eye, the globular under eyelid, the finely-arched eyebrow (all notes of a sweet and rich yet over-sensitive nature), are very remarkable.” Had Kingsley been writing of the portrait of Thomas Day, by Wright of Derby, he could hardly have described the man more accurately. This picture shows a head of singular beauty and sweetness of melancholy expression, shaded with long black wavy hair, untainted and undisfigured by pomatum or powder, large dark eyes, arched brows, a well-cut nose, and finely-formed mouth—just such a head, in short, as we should not expect to see. For, after all is said, Day’s leading

characteristic is his intense practicality, and the head might be that of a Shelley or a Keats. He was of the middle class; his virtues and his very weaknesses were theirs, and his aspirations were theirs also.

His father was a man of some property, who held the lucrative post of collector in the Custom House. His mother was the daughter of a city merchant named Bonham. Thomas Day was born on the 22nd June, 1748, in Wellclose Square, where in July of the following year his father died suddenly, leaving to his son an estate at Bear Hill, near Wargrave, which produced somewhere about 1200*l.* a year. The widow did not retire to this place, however, but settled at Stoke Newington, then, according to a contemporary account, "a pleasant village near Islington, where a great number of the citizens of London have built houses and rendered it extremely populous, more like a large flourishing town than a village." As was natural enough, the young widow sought consolation for her affliction in society, and before many years were over she married again. Her second husband—Phillips—was, like the first, an officer of the Custom House; but, unlike him, was a vain, suspicious, and tyrannical personage. He had no property, and married the widow Day simply with the intention of living upon her means—an intention which he completely fulfilled. He appears to have entertained a great dislike for his stepson, and to have treated him with much harshness. The mother was, however, infatuated with her new spouse, and worried her boy in after-years to make a provision for Phillips. It says much for his generosity that he complied with her wish, and on coming of age settled an allowance of 400*l.* a year upon the fortune-hunter who had made his childhood miserable, and

who drove him from his home by his violence and cruelty. The income from his property was, however, amply sufficient to allow Day to be thoroughly well taught. His earlier years were passed at a boarding school in Stoke Newington, from which he was removed to the Charterhouse, then under the mastership of the once famous Dr. Crassus. It is noted, as eminently characteristic of the place and of the boy, that he was chiefly distinguished amongst his fellows by his skill in boxing and by his extreme simplicity and truthfulness of character. He seems, in fact, to have been almost too good for a schoolboy—too prudent, safe, and benevolent—but his after-life proves that there was no affectation in the lad who refused to waste his pocket-money in toys and tuck, but saved it in order to give to the poor. From the Charterhouse he was transferred, at the age of sixteen, to Corpus Christi College, Oxford, where he stayed for three years, leaving, however, without taking his degree. Three years more were given to the study of the law; but he soon wearied of its technicalities, and, although he was called to the bar, never practised.

Sundry anecdotes of this period have been preserved, which are too characteristic to be omitted. According to his friend, "the ingenious Mr. Keir," of Lichfield, he was wont to display a certain "Quixotism of virtue," which irritated some of his friends. On one occasion, hearing of a noble lord who made a trade of seduction, and who had allowed one of his victims to fall so low as to go upon the streets, Day sent a challenge to him, with the alternative of his making proper provision for the unfortunate girl. It is satisfactory to add that the duel was not fought. On another occasion, when in chambers with Jones (afterwards

Sir William Jones, the well-known Orientalist), a spider fell from some books which the latter was moving. Jones cried out to Day to "kill the spider." Day refused, saying, "I do not know that I have a right to kill it. Suppose when you are going in your coach to Westminster Hall, a superior being who may, perhaps, have as much power over you as you have over that spider, should say to his companion, 'Kill that lawyer! kill that lawyer!' how should you like that, Jones? And I am sure that to most people a lawyer is a more noxious animal than a spider." In the mouth of any one else this speech would probably have been a mere excuse for the introduction of the gibe at the legal profession. Day was, however, a man of such transparent simplicity of soul that one can believe it to have been perfectly natural and spontaneous.

He came of age in 1769, and was thus released from the worrying and restless tyranny of his step-father. During his minority he had been exceedingly anxious to travel on the Continent; but to this his mother, acting doubtless under the advice of her husband, refused to consent. In place of continental travel, therefore, he occupied his vacations with journeys over various parts of England and Wales, which he performed chiefly on foot, and generally alone. His friend Keir says that he was accustomed to mix with people of all ranks and of all descriptions, sometimes going into the parlour of the inn, and sometimes into the kitchen, in search of amusement, and for the sake of studying character. Mr. Keir adds:—" Possessed of much strength and activity of body, a flow of animal spirits, a relish for youthful frolic, and a vein of humour and pleasantry, he greatly enjoyed these ex-

cursions, while at the same time he acquired an exact knowledge of the modes of thinking and expression, habits and manners of the farmers and other more uncultivated classes of men, to whom he could in his future life easily adapt himself, and whom he ever treated with kindness and condescension, rather as less fortunate brothers of the same family than as beings of a different and inferior order." In the course of these wanderings he visited Lichfield, where he was introduced to the coterie which gyrated around Anna Seward and Erasmus Darwin. Here he fixed his headquarters for a time, becoming very intimate with Richard Lovell Edgeworth. Such an association was natural enough. Both were devotees of the philosophy of Rousseau. Both fancied that Society was a tyrant to be shunned; both believed that the theories of "Emile" embodied the only sound principles of education, and both fancied that the natural man—the noble savage—must be of necessity wiser, better, and more virtuous than the man who was educated and brought up amidst the vices and the prejudices of society. A strong friendship accordingly sprang up between the two men, all the stronger, apparently, for the profound differences between them. What those differences were it is somewhat amusing to recall. Edgeworth was, with all his follies and eccentricities, a polished and cultivated man of the world; scrupulously neat in his dress and person, and eminently fond of society, and especially of the society of women. Day was notoriously anything but polished. His affectations—if, indeed, it is fair to give them that name—were all in the direction of roughness and rudeness. He was indeed scrupulously cleanly in person, but he preferred washing his abundant hair in the running stream to

submitting it to the discipline of the comb and brush. And this is a type of everything else. Day was grave, and constitutionally melancholy ; Edgeworth a light-hearted, jovial Irishman, with a happy temper, and a power of laughing at bad jokes which we of these degenerate days may well envy. Day was suspicious of women, and dreaded their blandishments ; Edge-worth, to a contrary extreme, fond of all the happiness which they can bestow. Day wrote verses to imaginary goddesses ; Edgeworth made very practical love to every woman with whom he came in contact.

After the first meeting of this oddly-assorted pair hardly a day passed without one paying a visit to the other. They talked, by Edgeworth's account, of everything—metaphysics principally ; literature, “Shakespeare, taste, and the musical glasses.” As time went by, Day began to show that he was not altogether insensible to the society of women, but he entertained some rather curious notions of the relations which ought to subsist between husband and wife. Some little time before he had been attracted by an anonymous lady at Shrewsbury to whom he addressed some not very brilliant verses in which he invited her to share his lot :—

Sequester'd in some secret glade,  
With thee unnoticed I would live ;  
And if content adorn the shade,  
What more can heaven or nature give ?

The lady did not enjoy the prospect of absolute seclusion from the world and abject submission to her husband's whims, and she accordingly dismissed poor Day to find some more suitable mate. In the spring of 1768 Edgeworth made a journey to Ireland, on which Day accompanied him. They travelled in their

own phaeton and with their own horses, and they were further favoured with the company of Edgeworth's son—a young gentleman who had been brought up on the principles of "Emile," and who by his father's confession must have been a particularly disagreeable companion. On their way they had a curious buffooning adventure, in which Edgeworth assumed the part of Day's servant, while Day pretended to be the father of Edgeworth's son. The matter ended in the appearance of Dr. Darwin on the scene, when the two philosophers fell at once to the discussion of mechanics, for which Day had no taste. Some topic arose before they parted, however, and upon it, says Edgeworth, "Mr. Day displayed so much knowledge, feeling and eloquence as to captivate the Doctor entirely." After this conversation they pursued their journey to Ireland, which Day saw with "surprise and regret." His philosophy had taught him to believe in the beauty of savage life: here he was in the midst of it, and strange to say, he does not seem to have liked it. "The hovels in which the poor were lodged . . . the black tracts of bog and the unusual smell of the turf fuel were to him never-ceasing topics of reproach and lamentation." At Edgeworthstown Day's uncouthness and want of manners made a very disagreeable impression on Edgeworth's father and sister, who were unreasonable enough to expect that when a gentleman sat down to table he was bound to conform to certain conventional rules. Day, we are told, "smiled with philosophic indifference at these prejudices in favour of politeness, and seemed to undervalue the understanding of those who set such a high importance upon external appearance." Day's genuine goodness of heart, however, broke down the obstacles

between them, while Miss Edgeworth's easy manners and agreeable conversation impressed him in spite of his stoicism. There was naturally a difficulty arising from her determination to retain her habits of order and good breeding, but before three months were at an end it was overcome. Edgeworth spoke to his father, who offered no objection to Day's morals or fortune, and the engagement was ratified. When the autumn came the friends quitted Ireland, leaving Miss Edgeworth to study metaphysics, while Day went to London to acquire something of the air of a gentleman. Before the winter was over the crisis came, and Day received his dismissal—a humiliation which he bore with considerable equanimity.

Thus disappointed a second time in his endeavour to establish himself, Day prepared to put in execution a scheme for providing himself with a wife who should answer in every way to his philosophic ideal. With the help of his friend Bicknell he selected from a number of orphans in the Foundling Hospital at Shrewsbury a girl whom he called Sabrina Sidney—Sabrina from the River Severn; Sidney after his favourite hero Algernon Sidney. In order to give her a companion he then went to the Foundling Hospital in London and adopted a girl from those he found there. Her he called Lucretia. With these children, one eleven and the other twelve years of age, he took lodgings in Chancery Lane, proposing to undertake their education there. That plan not succeeding, he removed with them to Avignon, "where," says Edge-worth with considerable *naïveté*, "he excited much surprise by his mode of life and by his opinions." There was certainly room for surprise in the establishment which Day set up. Here was a man still

young, with a couple of growing girls, towards whom he stood in a semi-paternal relation. They had no companions whatever, save only himself. They knew no French, nor were they taught any, and the lessons which they learned appear to have been in reading, writing, and high moral philosophy only. Naturally enough they were a source of endless trouble and difficulty. The children quarrelled constantly, as might be expected when they were thrown so continually together, and at last they fell ill of the small-pox. Day had now to turn nurse. They would not allow him to leave their bedside, and he had perforce to do everything for them. The French maid whom he hired in despair could of course speak no English; they could speak no French, and they positively refused to be left alone with her. They were at last restored to health and to a part at least of their former beauty. Day recommenced their education, but it did not make very satisfactory progress. They objected to being shot at with pistols, which Day often did to test their courage; they did not like their endurance to be tested by having melted sealing-wax dropped on their arms, and they hankered after finer dresses, or at least after clothes which should not make them objects of ridicule whenever they walked out. The experiment soon came to an end. After eight months of incessant worry and anxiety, Day returned to England, and got rid of Lucretia by apprenticing her to a milliner. Sabrina he kept for a time, hoping to succeed better in her case. As his step-father was still alive he could not take up his abode at Barehill, and therefore settled at Lichfield, where he found a society very much to his taste. His fancy for educating Sabrina was respected, and his wealth, his unbounded charity to the poor,

and his tolerant habit of life won for him general regard. Anna Seward patronized Sabrina, and for a time she was, in a small way, the fashion amongst the society of the Cathedral Close. Day was, however, rapidly becoming disenchanted with his fancy. He had hoped to educate a woman to a point of perfection which none can attain. She was to have "a taste for literature and science, for moral and patristic philosophy;" she was to spend her time in "feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and in alleviating the distresses of the most wretched and miserable amongst mankind;" in her dress and diet she was to be "simple as a mountain girl, fearless and intrepid as the Spartan wives and Roman heroines." And instead of this, poor Sabrina was a very woman after all his labours. If he fired pistols at her, she screamed; if he tried whether she could endure actual pain, she winced; if he expected her to eat dry bread and to drink water while other girls enjoyed wine and cakes, she pouted; and worst of all, if he told her a secret, she was sure to tell it to her maids. On the whole he began to think that the new theories of education hardly bore the test of practice, and in the end Sabrina went to a boarding school and degenerated into a very commonplace young lady. Three years at school were followed by a brief interval, during which Day allowed her 50*l.* a year; she then, somewhat to his disgust, married his friend Bicknell, who had gone to the bar and was doing well in his profession, Day giving her a portion of 500*l.*, in accordance with his promise. A few years afterwards she was left a widow with two boys and a very small provision for them, and Day settled upon her a pension of 30*l.* a year.

There was another reason for Day's readiness to abandon his educational experiment. In the house of the Sewards—the palace of the non-resident Bishop of Lichfield—was a certain Honora Sneyd. She was the motherless daughter of a Staffordshire gentleman, and a girl of great beauty, wit, and discretion. Edgeworth, who was on a visit to Day, fell in love with her, though he was at that time a married man. He excuses himself by complaints of his wife's peevishness and coldness; but it is certain that he committed himself quite sufficiently to warrant Day's stringent remonstrance with him against "a love that could not be indulged compatibly with peace or honour or virtue." The pungency of the rebuke is hardly diminished by the well ascertained fact that Day was himself in love with the fair Honora, who in her turn was most assuredly not enamoured of him. The pair of lovers waited from time to time on the object of their admiration, sometimes alone, sometimes in company, until at last Day put into the hands of his friend a formal proposal which he begged him to convey to her. The text of this document has not been preserved, but it must have been somewhat remarkable, inasmuch as it contained "the sum of many conversations that had passed between them." As usual, the plan of life which Day proposed was one hardly likely to be accepted by a gay, handsome and high-spirited girl, embracing as it did "a calm and secluded life, and total and absolute submission to her husband's will." The answer was what might have been expected, a flat refusal. Poor Day fell into a violent fever of mortification, and Darwin, in accordance with his usual practice, bled him. Happily a mental remedy for the mental disease presented itself in the course of a few days. Mr. Sneyd,

who had hitherto lived in London, suddenly presented himself in Lichfield, and brought with him all his daughters, five in number. The youngest, Elizabeth, who had been brought up by a niece of her father's at Shrewsbury, at once attracted Day's attention. She was handsomer than Honora, well educated, sprightly and agreeable. Above all, though she could talk well enough upon occasion, she was not disputatious, and a good listener. Day was naturally delighted with a handsome woman who would allow him to philosophize to his heart's content, and she on her part was fascinated with the romance of Day's character. His boundless generosity, his fancy for educating a wife, his scorn of wealth and of titles, his romantic ideas of love, and his notion of isolating himself from the world, all combined to fascinate the young lady. After a courtship of about three weeks, she completely took the place of her sister in Day's affections, and an engagement was entered into between them. All the affection in which she held her lover, however, was insufficient to cover his roughness of manner, and the question of marriage was consequently postponed until he should have acquired something of the air of a man of the world.

The friends went together to Lyons. Edgeworth to escape from the fascinations of the fair Honora, which were growing too great for his peace of mind, and Day to acquire the accomplishments demanded by the beautiful Elizabeth. At Lyons poor Day tortured himself in his endeavours to achieve the impossible—to turn the rough and rude cynic into the polished, fine gentleman. Seven or eight hours of every day were given up to dancing, fencing, and learning to manage the "great horse." In spite of his great physical

strength, he was knock-kneed, and his dancing-master kept him with his feet in the stocks for hours together in hope of curing this defect. All was in vain, however, the fair Elizabeth found Thomas Day the fine gentleman considerably less agreeable than Thomas Day "blackguard"—as at one time of his life he delighted to write himself—and with very little ceremony broke off the engagement. In his despair he turned again to Sabrina, and for a little while it was thought probable that he would put the top stone to the romance of his life by marrying her. It was not so to be. For some reason now unknown, but presumably one connected with matters of dress, he broke off his relations with her, never again to resume them. At this juncture his friend Dr. Small of Birmingham interposed with a suggestion that he should marry a certain Miss Milner, who partly from her gravity and discretion, and partly in order to distinguish her from a namesake, whose beauty had gained for her the nickname of "Venus," was called in Lichfield circles "Minerva." Day's answer to the proposal was an inquiry whether she had white and large arms. That being answered in the affirmative, he asked if she wore long petticoats, a question which received a similar reply; but upon asking further if she were tall, strong, and robust, Dr. Small gave him some sensible advice as to the absurdity of expecting an ideal perfection in any woman. "If you are not satisfied," he added, "determine at once never to marry." "My dear doctor," replied Day, "the only serious objection I have to Miss Milner is her large fortune. It was always my wish to give to any woman whom I married the most unequivocal proof of my attachment to herself by despising her fortune." "Well, my friend,"

said the doctor, "what prevents you from despising the fortune, and taking the lady?"

Common sense prevailed. Day went into Yorkshire, and began one of the oddest courtships on record. Miss Milner was a woman of considerable ability, with a great flow of language, and conversant with English literature, especially with poetry. She wrote well and spoke well, in a somewhat formal fashion, and Day was eminent amongst his friends as a declaimer on behalf of certain philosophical principles. The result was, that when together they had no want of conversation, and when apart their pens were seldom idle. Before many months were over they were married, and for a while they lived at Hampstead, where Mrs. Day, by accepting her husband's hygienic practice, soon lost the delicacy which had formerly characterized her. Edgeworth paints a curious picture of their matrimonial happiness. "I never saw any woman," he says, "so entirely intent upon accommodating herself to the sentiments and wishes and will of a husband. Notwithstanding this disposition, there still was a never-failing flow of discussion between them. From the deepest political investigation to the most frivolous circumstance of daily life, Mr. Day found something to descant upon; and Mrs. Day was nothing loth to support on every subject an opinion of her own; thus combining in an unusual manner independence of sentiment and the most complete matrimonial obedience."

Soon after his marriage Day bought a house and a small estate near Abridge in Essex. The house was small and inconvenient, and he proposed therefore to add to it. He was his own architect on the strength of a copy of "Ware's Architecture," which he had picked

up at a bookstall. How far he was qualified for the task he undertook may be guessed by the fact that he seems to have drawn no plans, and to have depended wholly upon the bricklayer, to whom his directions appear to have been of the most elementary kind ; the result being that in one case a room of some importance was actually built without a window, Day not caring to settle where it should be beforehand. Tiring of the dulness of Abridge, he sold the estate at a considerable loss, and bought another at Anningsley, near Chertsey. It was a large tract of barren heath ; but Day was well satisfied with his bargain, and sat down to improve it. It is hardly necessary to add that amateur high farming proved about as unprofitable in his case as in that of most of those who have tried it since. Happily for himself he had no children to reproach him with the blunders which so seriously impaired his fortune. It appears from one of his letters to Edgeworth, that the estate regularly cost him more than 300*l.* a year, leaving the interest of the purchase-money altogether out of account, so that if he had been forced to sell, he calculated that he would not obtain more than one or at most two per cent. for his original investment.

His end was more than sufficiently tragical. Convinced that the common method of breaking-in horses by severity was wholly erroneous, he undertook to break one in on a plan of his own. It partly succeeded, but the animal was not well broken, and in the autumn of 1789, when Day was riding him, it took fright at a man who was winnowing corn by the road-side. The horse plunged and swerved. Day was thrown to the ground, sustained a concussion of the brain, and died a quarter of an hour afterwards in a cottage to which

he had been removed. His wife followed him to the grave within a couple of years, dying, it was commonly believed, of a broken heart. The tragedy of his death at so early an age—he was but forty-one—must have been not a little increased by the discovery that the greater part of his fortune had disappeared. No less a sum than 20,000*l.* was missing, and as Day was accustomed to declare that he always lived within his income, it was not very easy to understand how so great a defalcation could have come about. One remarkably foolish circumstance is, however, mentioned by Miss Edgeworth in the continuation of her father's autobiography, which may partly explain the mystery. Day was from the first one of the warmest opponents of the American War, which he constantly affirmed must of necessity reduce the nation to bankruptcy. Under this impression he had sold out of the funds the whole of the property there invested, and as he did so when those securities were almost at their lowest point, he must have sustained a very heavy loss. The gold which he thus obtained he took to Barehill, where he deposited it under the floor of the study until the conclusion of the peace, when he again invested it in the same securities as before, but of course buying them in at a much higher price. Even so great a blunder as this, coupled with all his benevolences and with the costly improvements of his Anningsley estate, will hardly account for the waste of a third of his fortune in twenty years, during which he had been guilty of no special extravagance.

Although Day will be chiefly remembered as the author of the immortal "*Sandford and Merton,*" he has other claims to a place among the men of letters of the eighteenth century. His first work of any con-

sequence was a poem which he wrote in conjunction with his friend Bicknell, who married afterwards his *protégée* Sabrina. It was called "The Dying Negro," and was occasioned by a circumstance which occurred shortly before its first publication in 1773. A negro belonging to the captain of a West Indiaman, having agreed to marry a white woman, landed and got a clergyman to baptize him. He was detected and taken on board his master's ship, then lying in the Thames, when, finding no chance of escaping, he stabbed himself rather than make another voyage to America. Day, who hated cruelty with a righteous hatred, and whose head was full of the new philosophy of the "Rights of Man," and of similar matters, poured out his indignation against slavery and the slave-trade in sonorous lines, excellent in their way, but necessarily somewhat artificial, inasmuch as they attribute to the African savage the finer emotions which we are accustomed to regard as peculiar to the civilized races. This was, however, the fashion of the time, and Day was but one of many who fell in with it. Later on there is good reason for believing that he abandoned the notion which underlies much eighteenth-century philosophy that man is better, purer and stronger in a state of nature than when corrupted by the enervating influences of civilization. When he wrote "The Dying Negro" he was still under its influence. The third edition of this poem was dedicated to Rousseau in a fervid letter, which, however, abundantly proves that with Day philosophy did not altogether destroy common sense.

After a prelude in the classical taste of the eighteenth century, he goes on, and the passage is the more remarkable since Day was one of those who most

eagerly and most strenuously denounced the American War:—"It was some excuse for the disciples of Lycurgus, that if one man had been created by Heaven to obey another, the citizens he had formed best deserved the empire of the world. But what has America to boast? What are the graces and virtues which distinguish its inhabitants? What are their triumphs in war or their inventions in peace? Inglorious soldiers, yet seditious citizens; sordid merchants and indolent usurpers. Behold the men whose avarice has been more fatal to the interests of humanity and has more desolated the world than the ambition of its ancient conquerors! For them the Negro is dragged from his cottage and his plantain shade; by them the fury of African tyrants is stimulated by pernicious gold; the rights of Nature are invaded, and European faith becomes infamous throughout the globe. Yet such is the inconsistency of mankind: these are the men whose clamours for liberty and independence are heard across the Atlantic Ocean. Murmurings and rebellions are the first fruits of their gratitude, and thus America recompenses Europe for the protection she has bestowed. . . . Let the wild inconsistent claims of America prevail when they shall be unmixed with the clank of chains and the groans of anguish. Let her aim a dagger at the breast of her milder parent, if she can advance a step without trampling on the dead and dying carcases of her slaves; but let her remember that it is in Britain alone that laws are equally favourable to liberty and humanity: that in Britain the sacred rights of nature have received their most awful ratification."

In the same spirit of hostility to slavery Day wrote in 1776, and published some years afterwards a

“Fragment of an Original Letter on the Slavery of the Negroes.” The letter is a manly and outspoken protest against the crime of slavery, and contrasts the cry of the revolted American colonists for liberty from the yoke of allegiance to Great Britain, with their treatment of the unhappy Africans. The whole pamphlet is written with great vigour, and its moral may be summed up in the following sentence which occurs in page 33 :—“ If there be an object truly ridiculous in nature, it is an American patriot, signing resolutions of independency with the one hand and with the other brandishing a whip over his affrighted slaves.”

Whilst telling the truth to the people of the United States, Day was not unmindful of the opportunities of attacking the government of the day which the American war afforded. To this fact was due his next poem, “The Devoted Legions,” which he addressed to Lord George Germaine, and the Commanders of the forces against America. The subject is an incident in the history of Rome. War having been declared against the Parthians during the first triumvirate, Atteius, a Roman tribune, posted himself at the gates of the city, and while Crassus, at whose instigation the war had commenced, was passing him, made the altars blaze with incense and solemnly devoted the general and his legions to destruction. The allusion was of course to the calamities which might follow an unjust civil war—a character which Day unflinchingly gave to the struggle between England and her revolted colonies. In the same spirit he wrote another copy of verses—for the work is hardly entitled to the name of poem—which he called the “Desolation of America,” and designed to expose the cruelties and severities of the English

commanders in ravaging the colonies for the purpose of bringing them into submission. With these verses Day's contributions to English poetry may fairly be said to conclude. In Whittingham's collection they fill four-and-twenty duodecimo pages, and although there are some of the heroes of Johnson's "Lives" who have not covered more ground, it will probably be not unfair to class him with those *dii minores*, and to assign him a place with Pomfret, Granger, and Yalden.

Day's political opinions were, it will be admitted, eminently honest, but their wisdom may be reasonably questioned. He was, as has been seen, so ready to despair of the Republic, that at the outbreak of the American war, he persuaded himself that it could end in nothing short of national bankruptcy, and when the assailants of the government seized upon that unhappy business to promote their own plans for bringing about a revolution, he joined with them in their attacks. In their interest he put forth two or three pamphlets which are now forgotten, and which are certainly not worth resuscitating, and when the Corresponding Societies were formed he joined them in hope of bringing about a large measure of Parliamentary Reform. When, however, Mr. Pitt found himself compelled by the threatening condition of European politics to postpone his intention of carrying an effective reform, Day expressed his patriotic satisfaction with the policy of the Minister. "To expect," said he in a published letter to a friend, "that the Minister of a great and above all a corrupted State like this should calmly and deliberately demolish the whole frame of government for the sake of making an experiment, is betraying a lamentable ignorance of

human nature. I am not myself," he added, "such a child as either to expect or to wish that all government should stand still in such a wonderfully complicated system of society as our own in order that two or three great reformers may try their skill at greasing the wheels." It will not be denied that there was sound sense as well as good feeling in this declaration of opinion, and it is probable that not a few readers will be disposed to wish that the reformers of a later date had been less solicitous to display their skill in "greasing the wheels" at the expense of a suspension of law and order. When, too, Day expresses himself on the question of what the country may fairly ask of its Ministers, he speaks in terms which must command universal assent. "What I think may fairly be required of the present Ministry is," he says, "that they should pursue rational objects by fair and honourable means; that if they are not devoid either of interest or ambition, these passions should be worked up with public good, and not predominate in the piece; and that they should never be so entirely engrossed with the dirty ideas of preserving their places as to sacrifice truth, consistency and public interest, and private integrity."

These same sentiments animated all Day's public conduct. He very early gave up his enthusiastic plans for regenerating the condition of the country by modifying the machinery of the state. When he was very young, he was smitten by the common disease of young men—that of imagining that every evil in the state was to be cured by some modification of the legislative system, but as he grew older his illusions faded. To quote the "ingenious Mr. Keir"—"when he had an opportunity of seeing how few

were animated with a sincere love of their country; how deficient in zeal and activity this principle was among most of those who professed it; how often in parties the public cause was but a mark for some scheme of private ambition; how prevalent was the corruption of manners, the most dangerous foe to liberty; he was sensible what a feeble stand the defenders of public right could make against invaders actuated by ambition, avarice and other powerful selfish passions. His maturer reflection also suggested to him that good and evil were so blended in human affairs, that one arose often unexpectedly from the latter; that governments were sometimes obliged by the prejudices of the people or the interests of individuals to withhold part of the good which they wished to accomplish, and to permit evils the correction of which would be followed by some still greater evil; and he accordingly became more indulgent towards men in power for the little good which they generally effected." These words must by no means be taken to imply that Day had abandoned his interest in political matters. So far from allowing himself to fall into a state of indifference, he took the greatest interest in public matters, only to the astonishment and discontent of some of the more ardent spirits of the liberal party of that day he was by no means prepared to advocate measures which must have had the effect of subverting the constitution. His leisure was given to the composition of certain political tracts the interest of which arrives from their advocacy of principles which have long been adopted as standards by political economists of every school. The last of these productions was in the form of a letter to the celebrated Arthur Young, and was designed

to support the opposition of that eminent authority to the bill for preventing the exportation of wool to France—a measure which had been devised in the interest of the woollen manufacturers, and which when carried in the teeth of the agricultural interest proved a fruitful source of difficulty and dispute. The measure was in truth sufficiently selfish and absurd, and one which it is difficult to imagine the House of Commons willing even to consider. On the plea that out of the six hundred thousand fleeces annually shorn in England some ten thousand were believed to be smuggled into France, the presence of the exciseman was rendered necessary on every farm in England, and his certificate was required at every stage of the transfer of the wool from the back of the sheep to the loom of the manufacturer. Against a measure of this kind, dictated as it was by the merest selfishness on the part of the manufacturers, and acting as it was certain to do to the enormous detriment of the agricultural classes, Day protested with all the energy in his power, but it is worthy of remark that his protests are always free from that habit of attributing base motives to his opponents which disfigures so much of the political controversy of the last century.

After all, however, Day will be remembered not as a politician or as a philosopher so much as the author of "Sandford and Merton" and the historian of "Little Jack." These two stories have enjoyed a popularity as astonishing as it long continued. Even now the sale for both books continues, and translations of them have been made into nearly every European language. They passed long ago out of the stage in which editions are counted. Sundry publishers have stereo-

typed them, and year by year they publish reprints and re-issues, illustrated by more or less well-known artists. No book of the eighteenth century, in fact, is so widely read as "*Sandford and Merton.*" "*Little Jack*" has its admirers, especially on the continent, where its Defoe-like pictures of social life in the lower ranks of society are very warmly appreciated. "*Sandford and Merton*" is even more universally popular, and upon the whole with excellent reason. The influence of Rousseau and his educational theories may be traced in every page, but it is a Christianized Rousseau whom Day presents to his readers. In itself the book is a protest against the habits of luxury and effeminacy which were creeping in upon English society at the close of the last century, and which in the opinion of the philosophical school were undermining the robust and masculine character of the nation. With the object of correcting these failings, Day tells a story, the hero of which is a young peasant, the son of a yeoman, whose body is accustomed to labour and whose mind is educated by a sensible and rational priest in habits of temperance and sobriety. Harry Sandford may be a wholly ideal personage, but the ideal is not a bad one to set before a lad. In these days of luxury, when some of our public schools appear to be seminaries of extravagance and high living rather than of plain living and high thinking, it is pleasant to turn back to a book where the hero is distinguished, not by his prowess in the cricket-field and by his appetite at the supper which follows the match, but by his preference for simple food and his refusal to indulge in luxuries of which he stands in no need. When Day wrote the book he had got beyond the theories of Jean Jacques, but whilst rejecting the notion that the savage life

must always be higher than the life of civilized and educated men, he clung to the belief that simplicity, candour and honesty were even more desirable than the virtues of an artificial state of existence, however excellent in themselves those virtues may be. For the rest "Sandford and Merton" is an eminently healthy book. With all its morality—and it must be admitted that the disquisitions of the excellent Mr. Barlow are sometimes rather tedious—there is nothing strained or namby-pamby about it. Harry Sandford is a very boyish boy after all, and his *gaucheries* are sometimes amusing enough. But apart from his boyishness he is exceedingly courageous, and he knows how to use his fists. The battle with the bully Master Mash at the end of the second volume is as spirited as the fight in Tom Brown—it would be difficult to give it higher praise—but Day never allows his reader to imagine that there was any particular good to be gained by the fight in itself. It was only as a means to an end that Harry fought, and the end is never put out of sight. Modern books for boys too often fail because their writers talk of boyish pleasures and amusements as though they were the only things in the world worth living for. Even the ever-delightful "Tom Brown's School Days" is not quite free from blame in this direction. As a well-known writer has remarked, a boy might be forgiven if he inferred from it that the hero of that story was sent to school only to learn to play at football, and that lessons were really secondary matters. No one would ever fall into such a mistake from reading "Sandford and Merton," though there may be reason for fear lest a boy brought up on the book without limitations and corrections might turn out priggish and conceited. Day himself, however, never

deserved that character. He was always straightforward and candid—sometimes even dangerously so—but he was uniformly simple and masculine, even in what we are sometimes apt to consider his follies and excesses, and it is impossible to regard his influence on the literature of his time otherwise than as healthy and wholesome. Unhappily he died at too early an age for posterity to appreciate him at his due value, and his retired life left him without that attrition by contact with his fellow-men which might have perfected a character which in its elements was singularly attractive and even loveable. Had his life been spared for another ten years, and had those years been spent in the full current of life, Thomas Day might have gone down to posterity as one of the finest characters of the Eighteenth Century, instead of being merely remembered as the writer of the best book for boys which that century produced.

## ERASMUS DARWIN.

TOWARDS the close of the last century Lichfield became the headquarters of one of those mutual admiration societies which from time to time exercise an important influence upon the fashion of literature. The leader of the coterie was the Reverend William Seward, a canon-residentiary of Lichfield, who by a somewhat curious arrangement occupied the palace of the non-resident bishop. Boswell talks of him as “a genteel, well-bred, dignified clergyman,” and as he held several considerable pieces of preferment and left a handsome fortune behind him, the description is probably accurate enough. Johnson’s opinion of Seward was less flattering. “Sir,” said he to Boswell on their way from Lichfield to London in 1776, “his ambition is to be a fine talker, so he goes to Buxton and such places, where he may find companies to listen to him, and, sir, he is a valetudinarian, one of those who are always mending themselves.” The Doctor added some remarks about a “hog in a stye,” which it is hardly necessary to repeat. Seward had some pretensions to literature. He had edited, in conjunction with one Simpson, an edition of Beaumont and Fletcher, and he published some verses in Dodsley’s collection which were greatly admired—by his family. The rest of the coterie were literary after the same fashion. Amongst those who composed it were “the ingenious Mr. Keir of West Bromwich, and the accomplished

Dr. Small of Birmingham ; ” Sir Brooke Boothby, who “ so ably refuted ” Mr. Burke on the French Revolution ; Mr. Munday of Marketon, “ whose ‘ Needwood Forest ’ is one of the most beautiful local poems that has been written ; ” the Rev. Archdeacon Vyse, “ not only a man of learning but of Priors talents in the metrical impromptu ; ” Mr. Robinson, “ a choice spirit of Lichfield ; ” Day, the philosophical author of “ Sandford and Merton ; ” Richard Lovell Edgeworth, then lately married to his first wife ; and if last, not least, Anna Seward, to whose “ lettered taste ” the phrases quoted above are due. Amongst those who occasionally occupied places in Anna’s drawing-room were Watt the engineer and his partner Boulton from Birmingham, Dr. Priestley, the eccentric Lord Monboddo, Sir Joseph Banks, and Dr. Parr—all, it will be remarked, good Whigs, and all men with some claim to the title of philosophers.

Of this society Erasmus Darwin was the object of reverential admiration, and his voluminous works in prose and verse the theme of their eternal applause. From the candid admissions of his friends and associates, it may be gathered, however, that it was the philosopher more than the man who was admired. To put the matter plainly, he was an ugly fellow, and his manners were clownish in the extreme. Anna Seward describes him as of “ large and athletic frame,” but Edgeworth is more candid. Darwin struck him as being “ a large man, fat and rather clumsy.” He was much pitted with the small-pox, and in conversation “ stammered exceedingly.” The portraits of him which are extant fully bear out this description, showing him to have possessed a coarse and heavy face with remarkably clumsy features, a nose of the thick

Hebrew type, and a mouth of peculiarly bitter and sarcastic expression. Wedgwood's well-known cameo, reproduced in Miss Meteyard's 'Life' of the illustrious potter, is obviously idealized beyond the point of recognition. Mrs. Schimmel-Penninck's less flattering description corresponds far more accurately with Rawlinson's uncompromising portrait. The mouth was indeed the index to Darwin's character. He was sneering, sarcastic and sceptical in no common degree. Anna Seward especially remarks, in that inverted style of which she was so fond, "extreme was his scepticism to human truth." She is also somewhat enthusiastic concerning his sarcastic wit, but it cannot be said that the specimens of his conversational powers which his admirers have preserved are likely to impress the modern reader very favourably. Thus, for example, his friend Mr. Robinson, the "choice spirit of Lich-field" before mentioned, had in conversation with him "thrown the bridle upon the neck of his fancy, and it was scampering over the churchyard and into the chancel" (by which we are to understand that he was talking blasphemy), upon which Darwin exclaimed, "Excellent! Mr. Robinson is not only a clever fellow, but a d——d clever fellow." On another occasion this same "choice spirit" delivered a mock eulogium upon swearing, ironically dilating on its power to animate dulness and to season wit. Darwin's remark, which appears to have excited great admiration amongst his friends, was:—"Christ says swear not at all; St. Paul tells us we may swear occasionally; Mr. Robinson advises us to swear incessantly. Let us compromise between these counsellors and swear by Non-en-ti-ties. I will swear by my Im-pu-dence and Mr. Robinson by his Mo-dest-y." If these were the "terrific sarcasms"

at which the *literati* of Lichfield trembled, one is inclined to think that, like the conies, they must have been “a feeble folk.” Sometimes Darwin appears to have mistaken rudeness for wit, and to have laboured under the not uncommon delusion that when you have called a man a fool you have annihilated him with an epigram. Thus on one occasion a lady who was visiting Lichfield waited upon him with a letter of introduction. Adapting her conversation to her company, as she imagined, she addressed him in the affected manner in favour with the Della Cruscan school. Divested of its absurdity of form, however, her question was simple enough. She wished to know what there was of interest in art, literature, or science in Lichfield. Darwin replied in not less stilted phrase with a recommendation to her to go to the bull-running at Tutbury. The lady was naturally somewhat disconcerted, but after a moment’s pause she said: “I was recommended to a man of genius, and I find him insolent and ill-bred,” with which she retired from Darwin’s presence. Miss Seward is loud in her applause of the doctor’s prompt and ready wit on this occasion; but it will probably be held that the lady had the best of the passage of arms.

Besides being a wit, Darwin was a teetotaller, or almost one, and, as is not unfrequently the case with those who abstain from wine, he was utterly intolerant of its use by other people. On the other hand he was a great eater, especially of animal food, and of fruit both raw and cooked. If he drank wine at all, which he did but rarely, he confined himself to those pleasing compounds known as “made” wines—cowslip wine, currant wine, and what Mrs. Hoggarty of Castle Hoggarty was accustomed to call “Rosolio”—which

he diluted with water. It was perhaps as well that the ingenious doctor should refrain from more intoxicating beverages, for he does not seem to have been gifted with what is commonly described as a strong head. A story is told of an adventure of his which is hardly likely to impress the present generation as deeply as it impressed his own, with reverence for his habitual wisdom and temperance. It would seem that on a certain day in summer, whilst Darwin was living at Lichfield, a party was made up by some friends to sail down the Trent from Burton to Nottingham, and thence to Newark. A good luncheon was put on board, together with an abundant supply of wine, and Darwin took his fair share of both. Just before the boat reached Nottingham, he quietly dropped from it and swam to the shore. His friends hurried on to the town, where they found him in the market-place, making a speech to the crowd on the importance of ventilation. The local apothecary urged him to go to his house and provide himself with dry clothes; but to this invitation he turned a deaf ear, assigning for his eccentricities the highly philosophical reason that the internal heat caused by the wine he had taken, would amply suffice to counteract the cold caused by the external application of water. It is only fair to add, however, that this story rests mainly upon the statement of Miss Seward, whose veracity is anything but unimpeachable. Mr. Charles Darwin says, on the authority of one of his step-sons, that this half-t tipsy freak was the result of a trick played upon him by some gentleman of the party.

In his family relations Darwin appears to have been not wholly unamiable, though it was perhaps hardly to be expected that so eminently philosophical a personage

should find much room for commonplace affections in that portion of his anatomy which he was pleased to call his heart. His first wife, whom he married when he was twenty-six, was a Miss Howard of the Cathedral Close of Lichfield, the local influence of whose family was of unquestionable value from the professional point of view. She was little more than a child at the time of her marriage, and speedily fell into ill-health. After thirteen years of suffering she died, expressing rapturous adoration of her husband with her last breath. He remained a widower for some years, but about 1777, a certain Mrs. Pole, wife of Colonel Pole, came from Derby to Lichfield to consult him about the health of her children. A tender friendship sprang up between them, and when Mrs. Pole returned to her home, a complimentary correspondence began, which was continued for a considerable time. On Colonel Pole's death, his widow visited Lichfield, and as she was still young, wealthy, and agreeable, she soon had a crowd of suitors at her feet. Somewhat to the surprise of her friends, she rejected them all in favour of Darwin, whose greatest flatterers hardly venture to describe him otherwise than as a somewhat morose and certainly rather ill-favoured man of fifty. Despite remonstrance they were married, the bride making only one condition—that their future home should be at Derby instead of Lichfield. Thither they accordingly removed in 1781, and there a new family grew up around the philosophical doctor. His children by his first wife had been educated and launched upon the world, the high reputation which he enjoyed serving as an excellent introduction to their professional career. Their father's affection for them seems to have been, however, somewhat feeble, though not quite so wholly

extinct as Miss Seward tried to make out. On the strength of a hearsay report she ventured on a most cruel charge of selfishness and heartlessness on the occasion of his eldest son's death, which she was afterwards compelled to retract unreservedly. According to her story, the suicide of his unfortunate son produced no other remark from Darwin than the exclamation, "Poor insane coward!" after which he never mentioned his name, and devoted himself to the task of realizing his property. But though this tale is utterly unfounded, Mr. Charles Darwin is forced in his somewhat laudatory sketch of his grandfather's life, to admit that his own father, Dr. Robert Darwin, had been treated by him "somewhat harshly and imperiously, and not always justly." Mr. Darwin adds, "Though in after-years he felt the greatest interest in his son's success, and frequently wrote to him with affection, in my opinion the early impression on my father's mind was never quite obliterated."

With such a man, and such a society as that by which he was surrounded, Johnson could have but little sympathy. His leading characteristic, next to his genuine and unaffected warm-heartedness, was, as Mr. Carlyle has pointed out, a sincere and manly simplicity, which naturally rebelled against the mannerisms and affectations of Darwin's provincial coterie of admirers, and he must have felt besides an internal consciousness of genius, which would effectually remove him from association with "the ingenious Mr. Keir" and the philosophical Mr. Day. Politics and religion both interfered, moreover, to keep him out of the Darwinian clique. His own creed was simple enough, and might be summed up in the five words, "Fear God: honour the King." Theirs was much

more philosophical. Whether there was a God at all, was a matter about which they were by no means certain. On the whole they thought that it was perhaps as well to admit the existence of a "Great First Cause," but they knew very little about Him, and they troubled themselves still less. Instead of a religion, they had a neat philosophical system which explained everything and accounted for everything. Natural science was as yet in its infancy, but the philosophers of the eighteenth century imagined that they had explored all the secrets of nature when—to use the simile of Newton—they had but picked up a few shells on the seashore of Eternity. It is amusing, and at the same time humiliating, to read the dissertations of the early chemists, with their infantile babble about "fixed air," "phlogistic and anti-phlogistic substances," and the like, and then to turn from them to the self-satisfied speculations of the Darwinian school, who seem to have imagined that they had arrived at the end of all knowledge, when in truth they were only on its threshold. Johnson unquestionably realized the limitations of human attainment, and shrank from identifying himself with an imperfect science, which began by doubting all that he believed most firmly, and which, whilst denying the existence of a living and personal God, offered a handful of chemical products as a substitute for Him. Nor was his political faith less offended by the speculations of the philosophers whose cosmopolitanism was already leading them to sympathize with the enemies of their country, and who a few years later allied themselves with the forces which convulsed Europe. Whenever, therefore, he visited Lichfield, he avoided as much as possible the literary clique of which Darwin was the

centre. For Darwin himself, whom he met only once or twice, he entertained, according to Dupper—who in this matter repeats Anna Seward—a strong dislike, which on his part Darwin cordially returned. Nor did the dilettante science and philosophical liberalism of Miss Seward's tea-table possess any greater attractions for him. He went there now and again, but his strong sincerity and robust convictions affrighted the timid, trembling scepticism of the excessively refined lady who presided over it. Finding himself without a welcome, he remained amongst the friends of his youth, and we can perhaps hardly wonder at his choice. Miss Lucy Porter, his much-loved step-daughter, who was not ashamed to help her friend by serving behind the counter of her little shop on market-days, is, on the whole, a more agreeable figure than Miss Anna Seward, engrossed in the composition of elaborate impromptus, to be let off for the edification of her clique at the first favourable opportunity. On her side Anna Seward fully returned Johnson's dislike, and almost contempt, and lost no opportunity of manifesting her hostility to him both before and after his death. Thus she repeatedly speaks of him by Churchill's nickname of "Pomposo;" she calls him "the arrogant Johnson;" asserts that he "liked only worshippers;" and after his death started a ridiculous and cruel story of an uncle who, she was wont to declare, had been hanged. His greatest offence in her eyes, next to his obstinate toryism, was that he did not share her reverence for Darwin. "It is curious," she remarks in one place, "that in Dr. Johnson's various letters to Mrs. Thrale, now Mrs. Piozzi, published by that lady after his death, many of them at different periods dated Lichfield, the name

of Darwin cannot be found, nor indeed that of any of the ingenious and lettered people who live there, whilst of its mere common-life characters there is frequent mention.”<sup>1</sup>

If, however, Johnson neglected and despised Darwin, Miss Seward fully made up for his want of appreciation. Speaking of his “Botanic Garden,” which was first published in 1781, she says: “We are presented with a highly imaginative and splendidly descriptive poem, whose successive pictures alternately possess the sublimity of Michael Angelo, the correctness and elegance of Raphael, with the glow of Titian; whose landscapes have at times the strength of Salvator, and at others the softness of Claude; whose numbers are of stately grace and artful harmony; while its allusions to ancient and modern history and fable, and its interspersion of recent and extraordinary anecdotes” (amongst which, by the way, is the fable of the Upas tree), “render it extremely entertaining.”

Anna’s enthusiasm was shared by others. Prefixed to the poem, after the fashion of the seventeenth century, are a number of commendatory verses by different writers. Unfortunately, three of the five authors—the Rev. W. B. Stephens, Mr. R. Polwhele, and Mr.

<sup>1</sup> Yet Johnson had a very high opinion of Lichfield people. Under date 1776, Boswell writes: “He expatiated in praise of Lichfield and its inhabitants, who he said were ‘the most sober, decent people in England, the genteest in proportion to their wealth, and spoke the purest English.’ I doubted as to the last article of this eulogy,” adds Boswell, “for they had several provincial sounds, as *there* pronounced like *fear* instead of *fair*; *once* pronounced *wonse* instead of *wunse* or *wonse*. Johnson himself never got entirely free of these provincial accents. Garrick sometimes used to take him off, squeezing a lemon into a punch-bowl with uncouth gesticulations, looking round the company and calling out, ‘Who’s for *poonsh*? ’ ”

F. N. C. Mundy—are totally forgotten. Cowper and Hayley joined in laudation of the “sweet harmonist of Flora’s Court,” and assured him of his right to a high place amongst the poets. “We,” says Cowper,—

We deem the bard whoe’er he be,  
And howsoever known,  
Who would not twine a wreath for thee,  
Unworthy of his own.

Hayley, in a fanciful copy of verses, describes Nature as presenting Science with Darwin’s poem, in which both see themselves reflected, upon which the Goddess exclaims,—

Yes, in this mirrour of the bard,  
We both embellish’d shine,  
And grateful will unite to guard,  
An artist so divine!

\*     \*     \*     \*     \*

This with delight two poets heard,  
Time ratifies it daily,  
Trust it, dear Darwin, on the word  
Of Cowper and of Hayley.

The “Botanic Garden,” concerning which these pretty things were said, is dead now beyond all hope of resurrection, and it would be utterly forgotten were it not for the immortal parody of its second part—the “Loves of the Plants”—which Canning, Gifford, and Frere contributed to the *Anti-Jacobin* under the title of the “Loves of the Triangles.” As Mr. Hannay, a fine critic whose genius was wasted in journalism, has remarked, “Other poems live in spite of ridicule; Darwin’s ‘Loves of the Plants’ in consequence of it. The Attic salt of his enemies has preserved his reputation.” Turning back to it,

one wonders how such frigid, tawdry, turgid stuff could ever have found readers and admirers. Yet it was singularly successful in its day. The book-sellers paid the author a great price for it—Mrs. Schimmel-Penninck says, for the copyright or for the edition, she is not sure which, ten shillings a line<sup>2</sup>—and brought it out in a sumptuous fashion, with costly botanical plates and illustrations after Fuseli. Cowper honoured it with a criticism in the *Analytical Review*, which mainly serves to prove that a great poet may be but a second-rate critic—especially when he praises a brother poet for excellences to which he himself makes no pretension. The distinctive merits of Cowper's poetry are its directness, simplicity, and naturalness. Darwin's poetry is the very reverse of all this, and accordingly we find Cowper praising the “fine writing of the ‘Botanic Garden.’” “The descriptions are,” he says, “luminous as language selected with the finest taste can make them, meeting the eye with a boldness of projection unattainable by any hand but that of a master.” Cowper's accustomed fine sense of propriety seems, indeed, to have wholly deserted him in writing this review. He selects, for example, as a matter for special commendation, Darwin's expression “eyetipt horns” as applied to the snail, and declares that an ordinary writer would not have said so much in half a dozen laboured couplets—which may be true, but which, considering

<sup>2</sup> The “Botanic Garden” contains 4334 lines, which at this rate would make the copy money 2167*l*. Mr. Charles Darwin says that he has heard his father say that a thousand guineas were paid before publication for the part which was published last, i. e. for the “Economy of Vegetation,” which contains rather more than one-half of the poem.

that the impression which it is designed to convey is utterly inaccurate, is wholly beside the question.

Mathias, "the nameless bard" of the *Anti-Jacobin*, and author of the "Pursuits of Literature," criticizes the "Botanic Garden" with much more justice. In the course of one of his voluminous notes he says:—"I wish men would peruse the treatise 'De Causis Corruptionis Eloquentiae' before they attempt by prettiness, glittering words, points, conceits, and forced thoughts, to sacrifice propriety and just imagery to the rage of mere novelty. This will always be the case when writers in prose or verse (if I may be allowed to use Sancho's phrase a little metaphorically) 'want better bread than is made of wheat.' Modern ears are absolutely debauched by such poetry as Dr. Darwin's, which marks the decline of simplicity and true taste in this country. It is to England what Seneca's prose was to Rome. 'Abundant dulcibus vitiis.' Dryden and Pope are the standards of excellence in this species of writing in our language, and when young minds are rightly instituted in their works, they may without much danger read such glittering verses as Dr. Darwin's. They will then perceive the distortion of the sentiment and the harlotry of the ornaments. It would also be a happy thing for all naturalists, whether poets or writers in prose, if they would, in the words of a true poet, 'Look through Nature up to Nature's God.' Dr. Darwin is certainly a man of great fancy, but I will not cease to repeat that good writing and good poetry require something more."

The origin of the "Botanic Garden" was somewhat curious. Towards the close of the eighteenth century the Linnæan system of botany began to make its way amongst scientific men, and Darwin was one

of the first to take it up. His zeal in the matter was, however, less contagious than might have been expected, and of all the coterie of Lichfield he succeeded in enlisting only two recruits for his botanical society. These were Sir Brooke Boothby, and a proctor of the Cathedral Close—one Jackson, whom Anna Seward calls a “turgid and solemn coxcomb,” but of whom we know nothing more. The three formed the Botanic Society of Lichfield, and regularly published “Transactions” after a fashion which created an impression in other quarters that that sleepy little city was really a headquarters of scientific research. In process of time Darwin thought it desirable to establish a garden for experimental and scientific purposes, and for this he had a model ready to his hand. Mr Sneyd, of Belmont, father to two of Richard Lovell Edgeworth’s wives, possessed a remarkably picturesque garden on his moorland property. It consisted of a deep glen amidst the rocks, through which a mountain stream made its way. This glen he caused to be cleared out and planted, while at the bottom he excavated a chain of small lakes communicating with each other and fed by the stream. These lakes covered an area of about five acres, though they were nowhere more than seventy feet wide, and at the end of the glen the water fell over a rocky cascade of some forty feet in height. On the model of this garden Darwin laid out “a little wild umbrageous valley,” in the immediate neighbourhood of Lichfield. “It was,” says Miss Seward, “irriguous from various springs, and swampy from their plenitude. A mossy fountain, of the purest and coldest water imaginable, had near a century back induced the inhabitants of Lichfield to build a

cold bath in the bosom of the vale. *That*, till the doctor took it into his possession, was the only mark of human industry which could be found in the tangled and sequestered scene. One of its native features had long excited the attention of the curious : a rock which in the central depth of the glen drops perpetually about three times in a minute. Aquatic plants border its top and branch from its fissures. No length of summer drought abates, no rains increase its humidity, no frost congeals its droppings," &c. To this paradise Miss Seward was accustomed to resort, and by her own account on her first visit she wrote an invocation beginning—

Oh come not here ye proud, whose breasts infold  
Th' insatiate wish of glory or of gold,

and extending over twenty-three couplets. The verses were presented to Darwin by the author, and elicited from him the declaration that they ought to form the exordium of a great work. "The Linnæan system," said he, "is unexplored poetic ground, and an happy subject for the muse. It affords fine scope for poetic landscape ; it suggests metamorphoses of the Ovidian kind, though reversed. Ovid made men and women into flowers, plants, and trees. You should make flowers, plants, and trees into men and women. I will write the notes, which must be scientific, and you shall write the verse."

Miss Seward replied with engaging modesty that the subject was not a proper one for a "female pen," and begged him to undertake the work, which, after a due amount of pressing, he at length consented to do. The forty-six lines composed by Miss Seward, were, with some alterations, incorporated in the

exordium of the first part of the "Botanic Garden," and published in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, and afterwards in the "Annual Register" with Darwin's name. As it was not until after his death that Miss Seward laid claim to these verses, and as the details she gives on other points are curiously inaccurate, it is possible that there may have been some mistake in the matter, and that these verses, as well as the remainder of the poem, may be Darwin's own property. The whole matter is, however, confused and inexplicable, and may probably be set down as one of Miss Seward's romances.

As a poem the "Botanic Garden" has been praised too highly, and laughed at with too little mercy. Its form lent itself readily to satire, and the genius of Canning and his colleagues of the *Anti-Jacobin* has made the "Loves of the Triangles" immortal. It may, however, be doubted whether they would have troubled themselves with the absurdities of the "Loves of the Plants," had not the author belonged to that school of English politicians who sympathized with the French Revolution, who clamoured for parliamentary reform, who applauded the secession of the American colonists, and whose zeal for liberty was so great as not unfrequently to degenerate into licentiousness. If Darwin had refrained from eulogizing Franklin, sneering at kings and praising the "new morality," he might, with impunity, have carried on his eternal personifications, and have published the eccentric notes by which he explains them. In that case, however, the poem would have passed into oblivion even sooner than it did. At its best it is about on a level with a fairly good Newdigate prize poem; at its worst it is dreary bathos. It is easy

to understand the indignation with which Gifford or Canning would receive a passage like the following from the second canto of the "Economy of Vegetation"), which may serve to illustrate the politics of the author :—

So, borne on sounding pinions to the West,  
When tyrant Power had built his eagle-nest ;  
While from the ery shriek'd the famish'd brood,  
Clench'd their sharp claws and champ'd their beaks for blood,  
Immortal FRANKLIN watch'd the callow crew.  
And stabb'd the struggling vampires ere they flew.

The patriot flame with quick contagion ran,  
Hill lighted hill and man electrised man ;  
Her heroes slain, awhile Columbia mourn'd,  
And crown'd with laurels, Liberty return'd.  
The warrior, Liberty, with bending sails,  
Helm'd his bold course to fair Hibernia's vales ;  
Firm as he steps along the shouting lands,  
Lo ! Truth and Virtue range their radiant bands ;  
Sad Superstition wails her empire torn,  
Art plies his oar and Commerce pours her horn.

Long had the giant form on Gallia's plains  
Inglorious slept, unconscious of his chains ;  
Round his large limbs were wound a thousand strings  
By the weak hands of Confessors and Kings !  
O'er his closed eyes a triple veil was bound,  
And steely rivets lock'd him in the ground ;  
While stern Bastille with iron cage entralls  
His folded limbs and hems in marble walls.

—Touch'd by the patriot flame, he rent, amazed,  
The flimsy bonds, and round and round him gazed ;  
Starts up from earth above the admiring throng,  
Lifts his colossal form and towers along ;  
High o'er his foes his hundred arms he rears,  
Plowshares his swords and pruning hooks his spears ;  
Calls to the good and brave with voice that rolls  
Like Heaven's own thunder round the echoing poles ;  
Gives to the winds his banner broad unfurl'd,  
And gathers in its shade the living world !

A passage such as this, published while all Europe

was trembling beneath the shock of the French Revolution, naturally aroused the wrath of English constitutionalists, and when they found, two or three pages back, such lines as the following, a burlesque suggested itself as a matter of course :—

Gnomes ! as you now dissect with hammers fine  
The granite rock, the noduled flint calcine ;  
Grind with strong arm the circling chertz betwixt  
Your pure Kaolins and Petuntzes mixt ;  
O'er each red saggars burning cave preside,  
The keen-eyed fire nymphs blazing by your side.

The poetic taste of the time was in truth at a miserably low ebb, and those who professed to be its arbiters seem to have been at least as ignorant as their pupils. Witness the criticism of Horace Walpole : “The ‘Triumph of Flora,’ beginning at the fifty-ninth line, is most beautifully and enchantingly imagined ; and the twelve verses that by miracle describe and comprehend the creation of the universe out of chaos, are in my opinion the most sublime passages in any author or in any of the few languages with which I am acquainted.” These are certainly big words, and when we remember what English literature can boast in the matter of sublimity, we look with some curiosity to discover what it is which so enraptured the critic of Strawberry Hill. It will perhaps excite some amusement in the reader’s mind to discover that the sublimest passage in literature in his opinion was the following :—

“ Let there be light ! ” proclaim’d the Almighty Lord.  
Astonish’d Chaos heard the potent word ;  
Through all his realms the kindling ether runs,  
And the mass starts into a million suns ;  
Earths round each sun with quick explosions burst,  
And second planets issue from the first ;

Bend as they journey with projectile force,  
In bright ellipses their reluctant course ;  
Orbs wheel in orbs, round centres centres roll,  
And form self-balanced one revolving whole.  
Onward they move amid their bright abode,  
Space without bound, the Bosom of their God !

In its way this passage may be admitted to be not without force, but it is the force of rhetoric rather than of poetry, and, curiously enough, it may be paralleled in half a dozen places in the volume. And as the really striking passages are few and far between, whilst page after page is filled with technicalities and personifications, it is easy to understand why the great popularity of the poem rapidly passed away. Darwin failed as a poet, not from any deficiency of learning, or through any want of power to master the technical mysteries of the poetic art, but because he started on a false theory. Maria Edgeworth says that he had an idea that poetry consists in "painting to the ear," by which not very lucid phrase she apparently intended to say that the poet's task is to do by words what the painter does with his colours and canvas. If Darwin ever expressed himself to this effect it needs no elaborate argument to prove that he knew but half the domain of the poet, and that of that loftier part of his mission which deals with human passion and human affection he had no idea whatever. Now, as a very acute critic has remarked of another didactic poet, "no poetry can maintain its ground unless it deal with either the heart or the intellect," and it cannot be said that the 'Botanic Garden,' laborious and learned though it be, touches either the one or the other. Science and fiction are jumbled together, but the admixture is, to use a Darwinian metaphor, mechanical and not chemical. The poetical machinery is at best a clumsy and laborious

allegory, so enigmatical in character as to render necessary a constant reference to the notes ; absurd in itself, and beyond conception wearisome through its repetitions. As another writer has observed : “ Darwin had the eye and the ear of a poet, and the creative mind ; but his writings have served to show that these are of little avail without the heart, and the heart was wanting in him.”

One other point appears to call for remark. Darwin’s theories of versification were very singular. Miss Seward mentions that he “ ever maintained a preference of Akenside’s blank verse to Milton’s ;” he had also a contempt for sonnets, especially for those of Milton, though it might have been thought that those on “ The Late Massacre in Piedmont,” “ On his Blindness,” and “ On his Deceased Wife,” were majestic enough in rhythm and cadence, even for a poet who placed those qualities in the first place ; and finally, he fancied he could improve upon the versification of Pope by exceeding him in polish and by making every line as sonorous as possible—a process which, when applied to mean and commonplace matters, has a curiously ludicrous effect. No better illustration of his failure in this respect could be afforded than the passage descriptive of Brindley’s labours in connexion with internal navigation, a passage which, we may remark by the way, Miss Seward describes as “ supremely happy :”—

So with strong arm, immortal Brindley leads  
His long canals and parts the velvet meads ;  
Winding in lucid lines the watery mass  
Mines the firm rock or loads the deep morass ;  
With rising locks a thousand hills alarms ;  
Flings o’er a thousand streams its silver arms ;  
Feeds the long vale, the nodding woodland laves,  
And Plenty, Arts and Commerce freight the waves.

Following these prosaic verses comes a long prose description of a monument which Darwin suggested as an appropriate adornment to the Cathedral of Lichfield, while at the foot of the page is a note dilating upon the scandal of leaving so great a man unhonoured. The incongruity of all this with the purpose of poetry hardly requires to be pointed out, but the explanation of its appearance is simple enough. Darwin was an enthusiastic admirer of Brindley and his engineering schemes, and took a very practical interest in their execution. At one time he even went so far as to contemplate the construction at his own cost of a small canal to connect Lichfield with the Grand Trunk Canal at Fradley Heath, which, according to his grandson, was to have been only a foot deep and to have borne only boats of four or five tons burden, which could be dragged by a man. That scheme was abandoned, but the existing canal was in a great measure due to his initiative.

Thirteen years after the publication of the "Botanic Garden," Darwin produced his "Zoonomia; or, the Laws of Organic Life," a work in which speculation and empiricism are curiously mingled. He seems to have been perpetually engaged in contemplation of the mysteries of generation and reproduction, but it cannot be said that his guesses are invariably happy. Thus, in one place he maintains that man was originally an oyster, sprung into being by chance, and that by time alone he became first an amphibious and then a terrestrial animal. In the "Zoonomia," he threw over all speculations of this kind. The design of his book was to reform the system of medicine, by putting forth a new science of life. Henceforward, the origin of humanity was to be traced to "filaments." He does

recognize a God, though in his posthumous poem, ‘The Temple of Nature,’ he makes patronizing reference to the Great First Cause; and his creed at the “Botanic Garden” and “Zoonomia” period may best be judged by what we learn from his contemporaries. Mrs. Schimmel-Penninck, in the interesting fragment of autobiography which was published by her family a few years ago, allows us to see with tolerable clearness what his views really were. It is hardly necessary to say that he laughed at the idea of Christianity. On one occasion some person expressed a hope that he would one day accept it, and in reply he said: “Before I do, you Christians must be all agreed. This morning I received two parcels, one containing a work of Dr. Priestley’s, proving that there is no spirit, the other a work by Berkeley, proving that there is no matter. What am I to believe among you all?” From such a man it is obvious that the religious sense was in some way absent, and he certainly lost no opportunity of proving that it was. Consulted on one occasion by the friends of a devout young lady in very delicate health, he recommended them to “toss her religious books into the fire, except Quarles’s ‘Emblems,’ which may make her laugh.” He further lost no opportunity of declaring himself a materialist in the grosser sense of the term. He often used to say, we learn from Mrs. Schimmel-Penninck, that “man is an eating animal, a drinking animal, and a sleeping animal, and one placed in a material world, which alone furnishes all that the human animal can desire. He is gifted, besides, with knowing faculties, practically to explore and apply the resources of the world to his use. These are realities. All else is nothing. Conscience and sentiment are but mere figments of the imagination. Man

has but five gates of knowledge, the five senses. He can know nothing but through them ; all else is a vain fancy ; and as for the being of a God, the existence of a soul, or a world to come, who can know anything about them ? Depend upon it, my dear madam, these are only the bugbears by which men of sense govern fools ; nothing is real that is not an object of sense.”<sup>3</sup>

It is hardly necessary in this place to vindicate the spiritual nature of man. A doctrine so universally implanted in the human mind is not likely to be destroyed because a handful of “philosophers,” whose vanity is at least equal to their attainments, choose to invent a new God for themselves. Nor can it be said that Dr. Darwin’s new theories were much to be preferred to the old. His notion, as developed in the “Zoonomia,” is that all life originates in sensitive filaments. “Give me,” he says, “a fibre susceptible of irritation, and I will make a tree, a dog, a horse, a man.” Elsewhere he says (“Zoonomia,” vol. i. 493) : “I conceive the primordium or rudiment of the embryon, as secreted from the blood of the parent, to consist in a single living filament as a muscular fibre which I suppose to be the extremity of a nerve of locomotion, as a fibre of the retina is the extremity of a nerve of sensation ; as for instance one of the fibrils which compose the mouth of an absorbent vessel. I suppose this living filament of whatever form it may be, whether sphere, cube, or cylinder, to be endued with the capacity of being excited into action by certain kinds of stimulus. By the stimulus of the surrounding

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Darwin disputes Mrs. Schimmel-Penninck’s accuracy in this as in other matters. It may be that, writing as she did after the lapse of many years, she may have fallen into some errors of detail, but of her general truthfulness it is impossible to entertain a doubt.

fluid in which it is received from the male, it may bend into a ring and thus form the beginning of a tube. This living ring may now embrace or absorb a nutritive particle of the fluid in which it swims, and by drawing it into its pores, or joining it by compression to its extremities, may increase its own length or crassitude, and by degrees the living ring may become a living tube. With this new organization or accretion of parts, new kinds of irritability may commence." And so on. Enough has probably been quoted, however, to show the nature of the philosophy which this materialistic leader professed. We need not attempt a discussion of its value. Voltaire, in a famous passage of not very decent sarcasm, has said all that is necessary on this subject. Nor need we trouble ourselves very much about some other speculations of the same kind in which Darwin indulged. He may be found, for example, speaking with approbation of a philosopher—unnamed, but presumably himself—who thought it not impossible that the first insects were the anthers or stigmas of flowers, which had by some means loosed themselves from the parent plant. From these he imagines that other insects may have been formed in the course of a long period of time, some acquiring wings, others fins, and others claws from their ceaseless efforts to procure food or to protect themselves from injury. "None of these changes," he adds, "are more incomprehensible than the transformation of tadpoles into frogs, or caterpillars into butterflies."

In spite of all the apparent philosophy of these speculations it may be doubted whether Darwin possessed a really scientific mind. The ideas upon which his "*Botanic Garden*" is based were derived entirely from a study of the Linnæan system, and—not to speak

profanely—that immortal work itself is apt to remind the reader of those histories of England in rhyme which enterprising schoolmistresses indite with the object of assisting the feeble memories of their pupils. The religious and moral reflections of these latter specimens of “goody” literature have their counterpart in the outbursts of rather dreary scepticism—religious and political—in which the “Botanic Garden” abounds. Nor is much more to be said for the imagined identity of animal and vegetable life, which Darwin appears to conceive to have been completely made out. That Nature is a great and harmonious whole was known long before the philosophers of the eighteenth century began to speculate concerning her operations. A hundred and fifty years before, one Francis Bacon, enlarging upon an idea which was familiar enough to the students of the Platonic philosophy, had worked upon these lines, and it is impossible to think the theories of development and evolution, as propounded in the passages quoted above, either a legitimate deduction from or a worthy completion of the Baconian idea. In these speculative matters, as in the practical work of his profession, it is to be feared that Erasmus Darwin must be pronounced an empiric after all. The present generation can only judge him by his books, and it must be admitted that they do not afford the reader a very high idea of his genius as a physician. He is, it is true, accredited with many wonderful cures. He jumped into celebrity, for example, at Lichfield, by the treatment of one Mr. Ings, who had been given over as dying by the local practitioner. Darwin reversed the treatment, and saved the patient. Another case was that of a lady who was suffering from internal hæmorrhage. It

is related by Miss Seward, with a very circumstantial account of her own offer to allow the doctor to take from her sufficient blood for the operation of transfusion. Darwin found that the London physicians had been treating her with stimulants—wine, brandy, and so forth—and keeping her upon the strongest food, in its most concentrated form, with the natural result of increasing the haemorrhage. He adopted a milk diet, with abstinence from wine and everything that was likely to set up inflammatory action, and he succeeded in effecting a cure. The ulceration, from which the bleeding had arisen, had time to heal, and nature to reassert itself. For the rest his practice would seem to have been pretty much that of his contemporaries, though he was certainly in advance of the majority of them on questions of sanitary science, such as ventilation, drainage, and pure water. He appears to have even anticipated the modern practice with regard to the administration of stimulants in cases of fever, but his remedies seem to the non-professional reader of "Zoonomia" somewhat startling in their severity. He was a great believer in the value of bleeding, and his lancet was constantly in requisition. Even in his own case he used it repeatedly for the relief of *angina pectoris*—a disease which would be treated by modern physicians with the strongest stimulants. Miss Seward gives a long and circumstantial account of the manner of his death, and of his personal appearance during the latter part of his life. Some of the details have been repudiated by his family, but sufficient is left unchallenged to prove that the frequent bleedings to which he had subjected himself had seriously injured his constitution. According to her story he was actually entreating his wife and

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daughter to bleed him at the very moment of his death. That part of the tale may fairly be dismissed as another example of Miss Seward's too fertile imagination. All that is necessary to record in this place is that he died somewhat suddenly on the 18th of April, 1802, in his seventy-first year, at Breadsall Priory, near Derby, where he had been living during the last two years of his life.

His wife placed over his tomb, in Breadsall Church, a tablet recording "the rare union of talents, which so eminently distinguished him as a Physician, a Poet, and a Philosopher," of which she believed that his writings would remain "a public and unfading testimony." The latest of his admirers, Herr Krause, offers an interesting comment on this anticipation in the excellent monograph on Darwin's scientific writings, which has recently been introduced to English readers by Mr. W. S. Dallas. "Erasmus Darwin's system," he says, "was in itself a most significant first step in the path of knowledge, which his grandson has opened up for us, but to wish to revive it at the present day, as has actually been seriously attempted, shows a weakness of thought and a mental anachronism which no one can envy."

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